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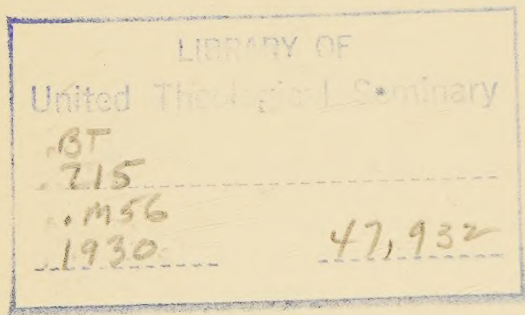


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CHRIST THE LORD

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PREFACE

IT might appear almost an irreverence to presume to investigate the greatest of all truths—the Incarnation of the Word. Happily, it is not so. Before His departure our Lord separated a little company of wayfaring men and ministering women, to be His witnesses, assuring them that in their ministration they would receive the aid of the Holy Spirit, whose office and whose joy it is to make increasingly glorious the Name which is above every name.

In this book I venture to add my testimony to that of myriads who call Jesus Lord, and who, believing in Him, rejoice with joy that is full of glory.

In other volumes, especially in "The Prayer-Life of Our Lord" and "In His Likeness," I have tried to point out some features of the character of our Saviour, and to describe His life of prayer and faith. I mention this to account for what may seem to be an omission in this book.

I could have wished to dispense with an examination into the reliability of the sources of our knowledge of Christ, especially as, on the scale of this volume, such an examination must of necessity be meagre. But in this questioning age it might be considered a cause of complaint if one should shun inquiry. What I have to say on this matter will be found in Part IV.

I have made occasional use of several articles which appeared in various publications; also of parts of a chapter in a small book entitled "The Fourth Gospel," which has been out of print for some years.

In quoting Scripture I have generally followed the Revision, except in places where there did not seem to be sufficient reason for departing from the Authorised Version.

I have added foot-notes only where it might be thought desirable to give authority for some statement.

When Leonardo da Vinci was about to depict the face of Christ in his fresco of the Last Supper, he prepared himself, we are told, by prayer and meditation; yet when he raised his brush to give expression to his devout thoughts, his hand trembled, and he was fain to leave his task incomplete. When we would bear witness to our Lord's perfection a great awe holds our heart: he that is of the earth speaketh of the earth; He that cometh from heaven is above all. We cannot speak worthily of Him, yet we must speak. He is God's eternal Word given us to declare; and we must utter it, even though our mind becomes confused and our accents falter. When we pass into the pure ether, thought can no longer breathe and speech becomes inarticulate. This at least we know: He witnesses to perfection in every phase of human life. He is the Supreme Exemplar of holy living; to be like Christ is ultimate goodness, inasmuch as He is the mirror and image of God. And He is the Saviour of the world.

"Christ is all, and in all." We dare say no less, and we can say no more. //

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PROLOGUE

"We confess that He is Very God and Very Man:
Very God by His power to conquer death, and
Very Man that He might die for us."

—*The Belgic Confession*, A.D. 1561

"THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." St. Luke leads us first into the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of sacrifice. The priest of Israel comes with agitation out of the Holy Place, where he has been offering incense, and dumbly gesticulates. The benediction has frozen upon his lips. And this silent priest, debarred from his sacred function, standing in the shadows of departing day, unable to bless, and signing helplessly to the congregation to return to their homes, is an evidence that the day of Mosaism is far spent, that its night is at hand, and that another Priest is about to appear, who in the worth and might of His own sacrifice shall bless His people with peace.

The holy light falls next on a mountain village, six miles from the caravan track, one day's journey from the Mediterranean, one day's journey also from the Lake of Galilee—a small village, twelve hundred feet above sea-level, clustering around a single spring: a place of rude manners and stunted culture. It was, however, a registered "centre", to which the priesthood of the district gathered ere they went up to Jerusalem, to fulfil the order of their ministry.

Mary was the child of working parents, and the mantle of service would early fall upon her. We know that she had at least one sister; the early Fathers say that she had two, she being in all probability the eldest. The medieval

and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). It is plain that Mary has not yet apprehended the full significance of that divine message. Her child is to be the Messiah, certainly; but a Messiah after the mould of Israel's judges in the olden time—like "one of the simple great ones, gone for ever and ever by." The "Magnificat" is moulded on the song of Hannah, and Mary looks upon her promised child as another Samuel—a Nazirite from birth, dwelling in the temple of the Lord from infancy, consecrated wholly to the divine service, hearing the voice of God sounding strangely in the Holy House, cleansing his hands in innocency in a corrupt generation, ruling the covenant people in truth and uprightness, and turning the hearts of the children of Israel back to God. Of all the vast redemptional meaning of the name that the angel uttered in her hearing, only one word finds place in the "Magnificat": "He hath holpen Israel, His servant, that He might remember mercy." "Mercy," that word is all: dimly understood as yet, but holding within itself the fullness of the truth that shall afterwards be apprehended by her.

Yet this faith, as yet scarcely percipient of itself and its own actings, received into our world the Son of God. Mary accepts the word of the angel in all simplicity, as coming to her from the Lord: she bows down before it, by no means realising all that it must involve, but willing in meek submissiveness to accept that which may be appointed for her: "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word."

PART I

MAN OF OUR MANHOOD

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

“That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith He wont at heaven’s high council table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.”

—MILTON.

“THE birth of Jesus Christ,” says the author of the First Gospel, “was on this wise.” The evangelist then proceeds to narrate the marvellous history of the entrance into the world of the Sole-begotten. Viewed from the high ground of faith which the sacred writers occupy, the supernatural birth of the world’s Redeemer is in exquisite harmony with the stainless life.

It is probable that the mystery of the Holy Nativity was not taught by the Church in her earliest days. We need not suppose that the apostolic company was entirely unaware of this amazing secret, but it does not appear to have entered into the Church’s public testimony until the mediatorial dominion and the very Deity of the Saviour stood confessed. For this one had not long to wait. On the morning of the resurrection the Church bowed low in worship before the Crucified. When the Spirit came heaven and earth were illumined with the glory of the exalted Christ; in the enumeration of His prerogatives and powers the New Testament writers exhausted the resources of language. Not until all this

had been received into the Church's testimony was she, in the divine wisdom, authorised to proclaim the miraculous birth of Jesus. To disclose prematurely the mystery of the Holy Incarnation would have been to lay open to profane and profitless discussion a truth never to be approached but in reverence and lowliness of mind.

It is according to the economy of redemption that each of the sacred writers should communicate his own personal testimony. Now, the consentient witness of the apostles had its beginning by the banks of Jordan, when the Lord was about thirty years of age. With reference to the silent years which preceded His manifestation to Israel, the Second Gospel contains only one word—a word not without significance—"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Of His boyhood or of His birth there is no mention. Yet boyhood and birth there were, for He was Man of our manhood.

The Second Gospel appears to embody with greater literality than either the First or the Third "the teaching of the apostles," that witness to the Master which framed the earliest rule of faith, those varied memoranda which grew to form in the first years of the Church's history. This teaching preserves the primitive mode of instruction given to inquirers and catechumens. As it is summarized in the Gospel according to Mark it contains those articles of belief which were most insistently pressed upon applicants for admission to the Church. For these the prelude to the Gospel was the attestation of the forerunner to Jesus of Nazareth: to them the beginning of the Gospel was their introduction to Christ.

It has often been remarked that "there is no miracle more properly miraculous than the Jesus of the Evangelists, in the profound contrasts and sublime harmony of His character." We are therefore entitled to ask, Does this Evangelist, in tracing the course and narrating the issues

of the life that was the light of men, prepare our minds to receive the doctrine of a miraculous birth, should subsequent testimony announce to us an event so surprising? We may unhesitatingly reply that he does.¹

In common with the other evangelists, St. Mark confesses the supreme greatness of this One who comes amongst us, and is revealed in this early Gospel, "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life": He is introduced as the Son of God. It is true that "Son of God" is a title given by anticipation to Israel's Messiah; it is possible also that few of those who so employed it realised its deep significance. But our Lord ennobles every predicate conferred upon Him; the humblest designation, when placed upon His brow, burns with a heavenly splendour. He is acknowledged as Son by the Father's testimony; as Son and Well-beloved He is more to be regarded than lawgiver or prophet; within the Kingdom of God this Son is not servant but heir. Finally, He Himself confessed, with an implication of equal greatness that sealed His earthly fate, that He was in very truth the Son of the Blessed.²

As applied to Christ, therefore, the term Son is very far from being a mere title of courtesy given to an accredited messenger; it is an affirmation of essential Deity.

Let us now assemble round this ascription of Sonship the constellation of attributes which according to this Evangelist diadems the thorn-crowned head. It is this Man who is the dispenser of the Spirit, who heals all manner of disease, who has authority on earth to pardon sin, who calms the storm and walks the waves, who as the

¹ "Those who believe, as we do, that Christ was a divine and unique Being, will certainly not be guilty of the presumption of denying that the circumstances of His birth into the world and of His withdrawal in bodily presence from it, may well have been also unique". DEAN INGE, *Outspoken Essays*, Second Series, p. 50.

² Mark. i. 1, 11; ix. 7; xii. 7; xiv. 62.

Shepherd of souls lays down His life for the sheep. He is Messiah of Israel, King of the Jews, Ruler of the Reign of God, Lord of the Sabbath. He terminates ritual restrictions, criticises the most highly approved opinions of the day, comments with unfaltering assurance on dark places of Scripture. He announces that the last aim of His mission is to give His life a ransom for many, that He has come forth from some far-off Presence to accomplish a glorious work, and that His blood affixes the seal of God to the new covenant. He foretells His resurrection from among the dead. He predicts that His gospel shall be preached in all the world; that He is to return in the glory of His Father, gathering His elect from the four winds. As Son of Man He calls on all men to follow Him, even to the laying down of life for His sake. After death He did arise, and is now and for ever alive.

This is the Christ who is depicted for us in the Second Gospel. Shall we be surprised if the New Testament revelation, as it unfolds, should declare that He whose life attained so glorious an exodus entered this world by a path untrodden save by Himself?

If, as there is reason to believe, the account of the Virgin Birth formed no part of the earliest apostolic message, we shall not look for any clear allusion to it in the Acts of the Apostles. And as the Acts is certainly by the author of the Third Gospel we find in this silence only a fresh proof of the writer's historical exactitude.¹

Nor shall we look for any explicit statement of this great "mystery of godliness" in the Pauline Epistles. St. Paul was a missionary preacher, and his letters are in the main addressed to young converts; also, in accordance with the

¹ On two occasions Simon Peter affirms, in agreement with St. Mark's Gospel, that the beginning of the apostles' witness was the baptism of John (Acts i. 22, x. 37, ff.). Thus St. Luke, to whom we owe the Christmas story, recognizes the standpoint of the Second Gospel (Mark. i. 1) as strictly historical.

usage of the revealing Spirit, he discourses principally of that which had been most significant in his own experience—the power of the once crucified but now exalted Lord.

But St. Paul's Epistles do not leave us quite without guidance on this momentous theme.

(a) Our Lord's pre-existence and heavenly origin are freely confessed by St. Paul: "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down?" "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." "He, being in the form of God . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." ¹

It has been argued that we can conceive of the entrance into our nature of a pre-existent being by ordinary generation; but it would be easier to believe that a wonderful and quite unusual act of God should be the efficient in such a case. On either supposition there must be a miracle.

(b) St. Paul's references to our Lord's humanity impress us as if they had been penned with a certain carefulness of statement: he seems to import into the terms which he selects a profounder meaning than would be recognised by the casual reader. Consider expressions such as these: "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law"; "His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh"; "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . condemned sin in the flesh"; "Of whom is Christ, as concerning the flesh"; "Manifested in the flesh"; Note in particular one such passage, perhaps the most impressive of all: "Christ Jesus, . . . taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man".² This certainly seems designed to arrest our thought and to awaken reflection.

¹ Rom. x. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 7.

² Gal. iv. 4; Rom. i. 3; viii. 3; ix. 5; 1 Tim. i. 16; Phil. ii. 7, 8.

(c) One of the most striking conceptions in the Pauline Epistles is that of Christ as Head of the ransomed race. This thought threads itself through all the web of the Apostle's argumentation, but it is expounded with some fullness in three passages—Rom. v. 12 ff., 1 Cor. xv, 45 ff., Col. i. 18 ff. Difficult as all these verses are, they seem clearly to teach that the Lord Jesus entered the race from without, and by a path that opened to no other son of man. From the hour of the first transgression sin and death came upon all the race—upon all but One. One only “knew no sin.” Christ Jesus was so far removed from our state of condemnation that in Him God “condemned sin in the flesh.” The entail of sin passed by no one who was in the normal succession of life from Adam, but it passed by this Man.¹ In His earthly nature, therefore, he stood apart from other men, He was *grafted into* the stock of Adam.

St. Paul was the associate of St. Luke, especially in those years during which the latter must have been collecting material for his Gospel. All that the beloved physician had learned regarding the birth of Christ would be communicated to the Great Apostle. Any argument against the Virgin Birth drawn from the supposed silence of St. Paul loses its point in view of the intimacy of these two servants of Christ.

The argument which builds upon the silence, real or supposed, of the beloved disciple, has even less validity. For we may be sure that St. John in Ephesus was not unfamiliar with the Third Gospel; and he, as adopted son of Mary, would have as great fullness of knowledge with respect to our Lord's Nativity as any man on earth. Yet so far from contradicting St. Luke, he hastens to supplement and interpret the Gospel of the Birth and Childhood by the most profound, the most far-reaching, of apostolic statements: “The Word became flesh.” The Eternal Word

¹ 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 22.

did not merely assume flesh, or enter into flesh; He came to be flesh. The doctrine of the Incarnation, thus expressed, seems to demand a birth-miracle.¹ "Nor must we forget," writes Dr. Peake, "that it was in the Johannine school, that the supernatural birth received such prominence; Ignatius insists very strongly upon it."²

Passing by much which might be adduced, we come now to the evangelical narratives of the Infancy which form a prelude to two Gospels, the First and the Third.

The textual evidence for the authenticity of the narratives of the Saviour's birth, and infancy is complete. No argument against the genuineness of these records has validity. Any objection that may be raised must be built upon subjective considerations, and of these reluctance to admit the intervention of the miraculous within the sphere of nature is the most pronounced. But if we are to reject all that transcends our customary experience we must give up Christ, for He is the Supreme Miracle of history. And when we begin to deny Him, the controversy passes at once from those special chapters to the broad testimony of Scripture.

An unhappy feature of some modern writings is the indifference with which they regard facts when these conflict with presuppositions which underlie certain cherished hypotheses. An outstanding example of this bad science is furnished by Wellhausen's Commentaries on Matthew and Luke. He passes by the first two chapters of each Gospel as though they did not exist, beginning his

¹ L. M. Sweet reminds us that at the time when the Fourth Gospel was written, "the miraculous birth was simply an item in a larger controversy. . . . The controversy in which John was absorbed concerned the reality of the Incarnation. There was no controversy as to the Virgin Birth considered in itself," *Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*, pp. 230, 1. If the doctrine of our Lord's pre-existence does not necessarily involve the miraculous conception, it at least points in that direction.

² *Christianity: its Nature and its Truth*, p. 185. See Ignatius, *Ad Ephes.* 18; *Ad Trall.* 9; *Ad Smyrn.* 1.

exposition only at the third chapter. Yet these four chapters are found in every unmutilated manuscript and in all the versions, and are constantly referred to by patristic writers. Dr. Nolloth is entirely right when he says of this contempt of evidence on the part of Wellhausen: "If this subjection to his own presuppositions is 'scientific criticism,' a fresh definition of the term will be required." A papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus in 1897 contains Matthew i. 1-9, 12, 14-20. It dates probably from the third century. Grenfell and Hunt describe it as a "fragment of the oldest known manuscript of any part of the New Testament." It impresses one to think of some early believer reading in this very document the familiar words: "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise . . . Mary . . . was found with child of the Holy Spirit."¹

The account of our Saviour's birth, as it is set forth in the First Gospel, places us at the point of view of Christ's reputed father. It is Joseph whose mind has been exercised on this theme; it is to him that the angel of the Lord appears in a dream, and it is he who takes action thereupon. A second time, and a third time, the angel appears to him; still later, another divine communication is vouchsafed.² All this information must have been derived originally from the husband of her who was "blessed among women." It would be both natural and seemly that Joseph should leave, for the instruction of children and friends, a deliberate statement of the unusual circumstances which attended this marvellous event, in so far as they had fallen within his personal knowledge.³

¹ Similarly, "Weizsacker in his classical work on the Apostolic Age has not devoted a single line or word to the tradition of the miraculous birth," Lobstein, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, p. 25.

² Matt. i. 19, 20, 24; ii. 13, 19, 22.

³ While the accounts of the miraculous Birth in the First and Third Gospels are not in any particular discrepant, they are sufficiently diverse to prove their independence of each other.

The record of the Holy Nativity contained in the Third Gospel must, in its turn, have come originally from the mother of the Lord.¹ Of the first two chapters of Luke Dr. Plummer writes: "We have here the earliest documentary evidence respecting the origins of Christianity—evidence which may justly be called contemporary."² This evangelical fragment was written either in Aramaic or in Hebrew, and Semitisms shine all through those first two chapters.³ We cannot believe that the author was any other than the Virgin Mother. With Dr. Godet we feel that "a narrative so perfect could have emanated only from the holy sphere within which the mystery was accomplished."

Somewhere about the year 57 A.D. St. Luke visited Jerusalem in company with St. Paul: "Paul went in with us," he says, "unto James; and all the elders were present."⁴ A measure of intimacy with the Holy Family seems to be implied. The mother of Jesus was possibly still alive. If we may receive the witness of Clement,⁵ John had at that time no formed intention of writing a Gospel. The duty and honour of conveying to the Church the truth regarding the miraculous conception is fitly entrusted to the beloved physician. Dr. Sanday concludes that "the place which the Virgin Birth occupies in Ignatius and in the Creed seems to show that it cannot have been much later than the middle of the (first) century before the knowledge of

¹ The sentence repeated (Luke. ii. 19, 51) that Mary treasured these sayings, and pieced them together in her heart, suggests that she realised that a holy secret had been entrusted to her.

² *I. C. C. in loc.*

³ Dalman, Resch, Lagarde, Gunkel, and others, consider it to have been written in Hebrew. Dr. Box, speaking from full knowledge of Judaism says: "It is hardly necessary to show in detail that the Nativity narrative is Jewish-Christian throughout," *The Virgin Birth of Jesus*, p. 34. Analogies drawn from pagan mythology, as in *Shaken Creeds*, by Jocelyn Rhys, are altogether irrelevant.

⁴ Acts xxi. 18.

⁵ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 14, cf. iii. 24.

it made its way to the headquarters of Christianity." Dr. Sanday's date synchronises with St. Luke's visit to James.

But the document¹ itself is certainly much earlier. The Canticles are Hebrew psalms, lit up with the Messianic hope, but altogether unaware of New Testament Christology. The rejection of the Messiah is seen dimly, through the "prospect glass" of prophetic vision. And the work of the wondrous Child is conceived in terms of the judgeship of Samuel. The narrative comes to us from years far removed from the agony and bloody sweat, recorded by one who scarcely yet perceives the wealth of meaning hidden in the angel's words. For it is to be remembered that the mystery of the Incarnation had as yet been uttered only by those pure lips of fire.²

The early date and the precise view-point of the Lucan narrative of the birth of Jesus is a sufficient answer to many of the objections urged against the reliability of the records. It is asserted for instance that the words, "They understood not the saying which He spake unto them" (Luke ii. 50), could not have come from the same source as the story of the Virgin Birth; that the interference of the relatives of Jesus with His ministerial activity (Mark iii. 20, 21) would have been impossible to those who knew the story of the Birth in Bethlehem. Had Mary fully realised in those days that her Son was the Incarnate Word, it would seem to have been impossible for her to fulfil towards the Holy Child a mother's duty. That amazing revelation came to her, as to others, by slow degrees. And yet, had she had a heart to receive it, the mystery was all contained in the angelic messages.

¹ We take it for granted that it was a *document* which St. Luke had under his hand. But there is no need to press this point; the argument does not depend upon it.

² Matt. i. 20; Luke i. 35. It is noteworthy that in the *Infancy Narratives* there is no hint of apologetic or embarrassment.

It is argued also that the emphasis laid on Bethlehem, in both narratives, contradicts the account of the earlier Nazareth residence as given by Luke; or that, as the First Evangelist does not mention the previous abode of Joseph in Nazareth, we may conclude that he did not know of it. But arguments from silence are proverbially precarious. If we did not know that the Third Gospel and the Acts came from the same hand, we might readily suppose—reasoning on those lines—that St. Luke imagined the ascension to have taken place on the day of the resurrection. Yet it is he who tells us that Jesus showed Himself alive, after His passion, during forty days (Acts i. 3). One who is writing with a particular purpose is not at pains to enumerate all the circumstances which converge upon the event to be described. The two gospel narratives are divergent in many respects, but there is not a hint of disagreement between them. The difference of their point of view makes their inner unity all the more impressive. And does one not see that Mary's thought was that of Hannah, to place her Son in the vicinity of the temple within reach of priestly instruction?

Much has been made of the supposed fact that St. Luke seems to leave no room in his narrative for the descent into Egypt. We must remember that in these brief memoranda Mary surveys a wide range, through which events pass in swift succession. The words which close her private communings sum up the memories of years: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." Why should we judge that the phrase, "When they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord," exhausted its significance in the purification and presentation in the temple? All Mary's hopes for the training of her Child in the law of the Lord might well express themselves in these words. She had done what she could; it was her desire to do

more. Is it not possible that a special offering in which the heart of the mother was much engaged was presented to the Lord in Jerusalem before parents and Child wended their way back to Galilee of the Gentiles? Who knows what vows of thanksgiving she may have taken upon herself? Her second son was a Nazirite from his birth.¹

Other objections are of little weight. If Mary in the temple says, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing," that is precisely how one would expect her to speak. Nothing else would have been possible in the Nazareth home. One may add that the manner in which the Gospels so naturally reflect the common speech regarding our Lord's parentage is an evidence in favour of their utter truthfulness.

While it is true that the Infancy narratives stand apart from the record of the Ministry, it was inevitable that it should be so. At the same time, their close connection with what follows is shown by the way in which the genealogy of the Third Gospel is mortised into the body of the book.²

The doctrinal importance of this great event is summed up in the words of Gabriel: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." The sinless life and the co-essential union of the Son with the Father are, to say the least, made more credible to us by the miraculous interposition of God in the birth of Jesus.

Schleiermacher would evade the Virgin Birth by substituting one miracle for another. He supposes that all the natural conditions of human birth were present in the Nativity of Jesus, but that an absolutely creative act,

¹ Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 23.

² Dr. Machen weakens his case somewhat by maintaining that the genealogy in the Third Gospel is that of Joseph. See to the contrary Dr. W. M. Christie in *The King's Writ* i. 46.

to cut off the succession of sin, was added.¹ Is it not better to accept the miracle which is already certified, than to imagine one that is quite without proof? Miracle of some sort there must be, if a sinless man is to spring from Adam's race. Certainly, Schleiermacher's supposition is not more credible than the Gospel story, and one does not see how it can cover the necessities of the case. On the other hand, all the doctrinal presuppositions of the New Testament history are conserved by the Gospel narrative. Our Lord is true Man, without sin, nearest of kin to us, Head of the new humanity, Very God. The Scriptural doctrine of the Virgin Birth harmonizes perfectly with each of these great truths.

If our Lord had entered the race by natural generation, it would be extremely difficult for us to believe that the Child of Mary was the Word Incarnate. We should have been almost compelled to think of Him as a mere man, who, in an unusual degree, had received the indwelling of the divine life. He might thus appear to us as the First-Born among many brethren, but He could not be our Redeemer. His absolute pre-existence, His relation to the cosmos, His eternal power and Godhead, do not seem to be congruent with the manner of birth that is common to men. He bears a name that no one knows but Himself.

The particular word employed by the angel as descriptive of the action of the Holy Spirit in connection with the birth of Christ is "overshadow." "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God."² This term is apparently reminiscent of the entrance of the

¹ *The Christian Faith*, para. 97.

² Luke i. 35, cf. Exodus xl. 35, LXX. Lobstein allows that "the expression Son of God must here be taken in its most literal sense", *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, p. 67.

Shekhina glory into the tabernacle set up in the Wilderness. The mystery of the Holy Nativity is probably presented to us under this figure. As the uncreated fire, sheathed in its encircling mist, swept through the holy house, all human ministration was expelled, and the Divine Presence filled, possessed, and hallowed all. So it may have been when the Spirit of God overshadowed the Galilean maiden, filling her with faith, humility, and the surrender of meek obedience. Thus, to use the expression delighted in by some ancient mystics, "Jesus was born of Mary's faith and belief"; but the efficient cause of the union of the Word with our nature was God the Holy Ghost, Creator and Sanctifier.

Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh. Beyond the Cross we have the Resurrection; behind the Manger we have the Great Descent.

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD

“And yet, I think, at Golgotha,
as Jesus’ eyes were closed in death,
They saw with love most passionate
the village street at Nazareth.”

—SIR EDWARD HILTON YOUNG.

IN the Gospel of the Infancy the growth of the Holy Child, until He became “a Son of the Law,” is recorded in these words: “And the Child grew, and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” And afterwards, until His thirtieth year, “Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.” (Luke ii. 40, 52).

I

“*The Child grew, and waxed strong*”. “*Jesus increased . . . in stature*.” This is the happy recollection of Mary the Mother. She had watched with a satisfied heart her Son growing tall and shapely, radiating healthful vigour, and reaching forth towards a glorious manhood. Seeing that there was in Him no taint of sin, we can admit no failure of His bodily powers. As afterwards He evidenced Himself to be “a most manly man,” so, even physically, He presented a noble example of boyhood.

In the Early Church two contrary opinions were held respecting our Lord’s outward appearance: the one that He was plain, if not even unlovely in feature, in harmony with the announcement of Isaiah, “He hath no form nor comeliness, that we should look upon Him, nor beauty

that we should desire Him"¹; the other, that He was most pleasant to look upon, according to the saying of the Psalmist, "Thou art fairest of the children of men." Neither passage is in the least degree relevant, and the Gospels are almost entirely silent regarding the Saviour's physical appearance. Yet here and there in the Evangelic Records we may trace the suggestion that, even under bodily aspects, He witnessed to the possession of a royal nature. His countenance was frank and open; His expression was full of benignity.² His voice was vibrant, musical in its cadences, multitudinous as the noise of many waters.³ Even when, on the Patmos Shore, those tones sounded forth in resurrection power, the beloved disciple recognised in them the familiar accents of the Son of man. His glance, vivid, searching, appealing, registered the full scale of natural emotion. Now His eyes shone like a leaping flame, or pierced as a sword to the dividing of soul and spirit, quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Now they flashed in righteous indignation; again, they rested complacently upon those whom He loved; at times they were lifted up to heaven, to behold those things which are unseen and eternal; frequently they became tenderly compassionate, dim with unshed tears. His eyes were as a fount of pity when He turned and looked upon Peter; they grew stern with unflinching resolution as He set His face to go up to Jerusalem.⁴

Our Lord was ever meek and lowly; among His disciples He was as one who served; although the First He was willing to be as the last. Yet when His disciples said of Him, "He is Master and Lord," they said well. In

¹ In the Slavonic Josephus, recently worked over by Dr. Eisler, this opinion is set forth in a peculiarly offensive way.

² John i. 14.

³ Rev. i. 15.

⁴ Rev. i. 14; Mark. x. 23; xi. 11; Luke xx. 17; Mark. iii. 5; iii. 34; x. 21; John i. 42; Matt. xiv. 19; Luke x. 18; John xvii. 1; Matt. xiv. 14; John iv. 35; Luke xix. 41; xxii. 61; ix. 51.

the opening of His ministry He purged the temple courts of an unrighteous traffic, the abashed traders fleeing before Him. Among the brawling Nazarenes, before the infuriated Jews at the gate of the temple, confronting the Roman legionaries at the enclosure of the Olive Garden, He so arrayed Himself in kingliness that by His majestic bearing He overawed His antagonists, scattering the opposing crowds.¹

Sometimes He seems to have urged Himself beyond His strength, as if He knew that the time was shortened, and that the night was soon to fall. Unhasting—"Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Unresting also—"I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Being wearied with His journey, He sat *thus* on the well.² After a long day of ministering and teaching it was as if faintness overpowered Him. The disciples took Him *even as He was*;³ they carried Him tenderly to the vessel and pillowed His head on the helmsman's cushion; presently exhausted nature took refuge in a slumber which even the crash of the storm and the deep wash of the waters could not break. On the day of His passion He passed along His sorrowful way, the cross swaying on His bruised shoulder, till (possibly on the steps leading up to the Damascus Gate) He fell forspent; so, many a time before, His tired feet had hasted in His unwearying quest for the souls of men. But even then the penitent thief acknowledged Him as King, and the centurion confessed Him to be a Son of God. Wan with the vigil, pained with the evil questionings, lacerated by the scourge, outraged by the mockery, He yet appeared to Pilate as the Man of men (John xix. 5). "Art Thou, then, a King?" "Thou sayest it; I am a King." "Rough wood was His throne."

¹ Luke iv. 30; John viii. 59, xviii. 6.

² Mark x. 36 ff.

³ John iv. 6.

II

"Becoming full of wisdom." As there was no defect of nature in Him there can have been no arrest in His progress towards maturity. As an infant He acquired the power of speech, He learned to frame in words His thoughts and feelings. Those facts which form the groundwork of education were communicated to Him, and in receiving them His mental powers were enlarged. By degrees He gained acquaintance with the customary branches of knowledge, for it behoved Him to be made in all things like unto His brethren.

Hebrew education centres in the home; the primary instructors of the Jewish child are the parents. Tutors and governors, masters and sages, have entered into the story of the Hebrew Commonwealth, and become potent there; but from the beginning the father and mother were the God-appointed teachers of the children of the families of Israel.

Everywhere, of necessity, the mother is the earliest teacher, and this not by formal instruction, but purely by her spirit and by the manner of her life. In elementary tuition, at least, conduct can be taught only by example. What love is one can display only by loving, what truth is only by being true. The mother of Jesus was Mary "dowered with the favour of God." The first lesson-book of the Babe of Bethlehem was His mother's countenance, wrapt in holy calm, alit with the fervour of love. With large questioning eyes He watched her as she went about the common ways of life, sanctifying trivial tasks and homely duties to the cultivation of those radiant graces which were to find in Him their perfect Exemplar.

But as the book of Proverbs more than once reminds us, the mother in Israel taught also by the law of her lips. She would recite or chant the Hebrew Psalms, as Christian

mothers do to-day, and shall to the end of time. From her, therefore, the Holy Child would receive His first instruction in righteousness, uttered in words that are familiar to our own little ones: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." "O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever." "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." She would recount to Him some of the great events of Israel's history—those ancient heroisms of faith in which the elect of the Lord, drawing strength from weakness, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the alien. She would impress upon His memory some of the precepts of that holy law which is "exceeding broad," some requirements of divine justice, some splendours of redeeming grace. She would initiate Him also into the ritual of divine service; when she lit the evening lamp she would instruct Him as to the ordinance of the Sabbath; as she prepared the bread of festival she would narrate the story of redemption through the blood of sprinkling; whenever He entered or left the house He would, accordingly to her direction, touch and salute the *mezuzah*, repeating as He did so the closing sentence of "the traveller's psalm"—"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore."

But the first formal instruction given to the Holy Child would be by Joseph, who stood to Him in the room of an earthly father. As soon as the little One was able to understand it, Joseph would rehearse to Him, until it was written deep on heart and memory, that epitome of religion which has been called the Hebrew Creed: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This is the loftiest

instruction that human lips may frame or heart of man receive. Like some rare jewel it holds within itself inestimable wealth. God is love; God is worthy of love to the uttermost; God loves, and calls for answering affection.

The Creed continues: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." The instruction of a father is to be given, not formally only, but pervasively. The heart of a parent ought to be so fully occupied with the things of God that he would discourse of them in simple and natural ways, as if the things which are unseen and eternal were, after all, the most relevant of the things that are. And we may surely believe that the husband of Mary would be so unmistakably under the guidance of the Spirit of God that his utterances on sacred themes would be as the outpouring of a living spring.

In the time of our Lord's childhood a far-reaching system of school-instruction had taken root in Palestine, and had probably extended to Nazareth.¹ Educational disciplines among the Hebrews reach back to primitive times. Josephus attributes the beginning of them to Moses, who, he says, "ordained that children should be instructed in the elements of knowledge, reading and writing, so that they might walk according to the laws, and know the deeds of their forefathers." "Moses," he adds, "was the greatest of schoolmasters." Perhaps we ought not in this connection to think of "school" as we commonly understand the word, but rather of some simple mode of education. There can, however, be no doubt that even the ancient Hebrews had some knowledge of

¹ See Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, chapter IX.

reading and writing, and that in the days of the monarchy such acquirements were not unusual. The Siloam inscription shows that writing was an art practised by labouring men in the time of Hezekiah. Amos the herdsman was the first of the "literary" prophets. And, not to speak of the book of Deuteronomy, the book of Proverbs is an educational manual of quite unusual excellence. The school system existing in Palestine after the Maccabean era was extended and enriched by Simon, son of Shetach, about the year 70 B.C. After a time, certainly not later than A.D. 64, it was made compulsory. The Talmud roundly affirms that no one ought to live in a place where there is no school, and that even a village which enjoyed no educational facilities was to be destroyed. No Jew, it was said, is without learning: the ignorant are accursed. The editor of the Wisdom of the Son of Sira, writing in the second century before Christ, declares that the Jews are to be commended above all peoples for the excellence of their scheme of education; and it does not appear that his claim was unfounded.

We are able to conjecture with much probability the course of instruction prescribed to the Child Jesus. At the age of five, or soon after, He would begin to attend the village school, which was under the control of the rulers of the synagogue. Nazareth, as one of the rendezvous of the priests about to proceed on their pilgrim journeys to Jerusalem, would possess a synagogue of some importance, and its school would in all probability be efficiently handled by the teacher in charge. Synagogues were called "Houses of Instruction," and schools were entitled "Houses of the Book," for all the teaching was religious, being based upon the Holy Scriptures. For at least five years the pupils were trained to memorise the sacred text, especially that of the Pentateuch. "For," said the scribes, "everything in the world is contained within the books

of the law." This teaching was so thorough that Josephus boasts that the Jew knows the law better than his own name. The first book to be studied was Leviticus. It is interesting to think of the grave-browed, bright-haired Boy conning the ritual which portrayed the predestined sacrifice of the Lamb of God. When the Books of the Law had been mastered, the class was led on to the Prophetical Writings, and after that to the Devotional and Wisdom Literature.

The initiation of our Lord as "a son of the law" probably marked the close of His attendance at school. "Our son's education," Joseph might say to some inquiring neighbour, "is finished." This was not the education originally planned. When Joseph and Mary went up together to the City of David it was not their intention to return to Galilee.¹ They would remain in Judea, and in the course of years would bring their Child to Jerusalem, placing Him it may be under the guardianship of the authorities, as Hannah had left her boy in the house of the Lord at Shiloh. In that event He would have received instruction from the most illustrious of those teachers who sat in the seat of Moses. But such was not the will of the Father. Jesus was destined not to be a scribe, but a prophet; not a ruler in Israel, but a peasant of Galilee. The "lawyers" were sensitive to the absence of their formulas in the teaching of Jesus. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Tried by the standard of the professional religionist in Israel, our Lord and His disciples were quite without "enlargement of science"; but the people heard Him gladly. They said, "Who teacheth like Him?" And again, "Never man spake like this man."

The knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures communicated to the opening intelligence of the Child Jesus was transmuted into wisdom. How rapidly His reflective faculty

¹ Matt. ii. 22.

attained maturity is evidenced by the incident of His being found in the temple courts in conference with the doctors of the law while the days of unleavened bread were running their course. Mary and Joseph after anxious search "found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers."

III

"And the grace of God was upon Him." Grace is a word which in its passage from the Old Testament to the New has attracted to itself certain pleasing conceptions. Originally it denoted the divine favour; but as it proceeds in self-realisation it clothes itself with beauty and is radiant with gladness.

Those dwellers in Nazareth who were of an understanding heart were early made aware of the singular charm that diffused itself around the Son of Mary. Out of a base environment He grew pure as a lily, fragrant as a rose; the seal of honour was stamped upon His brow. Like other children in all besides, He differed from His fellows in this: He knew no sin. He was transparent as truth itself; His thoughts were stainless as snow; selfishness cast no shadow on His soul; His concern was only for others. In the grace of the Holy Spirit He always did those things which pleased the Father, and ceaselessly He walked in the gladness of the Eternal Love. As afterwards He was to consecrate our manhood and give triumph to our death, so in those apparently uneventful years He hallowed infancy and ennobled childhood.

The one ray of light which pierces the darkness of the Nazareth years is the word which the Holy Child addressed to His anxious parents in the temple: "How is it that

ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"¹

This question may suggest to us that during the days of preparation in Nazareth for the solemn dedication of Himself to the service of the Kingdom of God, a divine call had come to Jesus. As He bound Himself with the ordinances appropriate to His novitiate He responded to that call. He was about to proceed to the City of Solemnities, to the place of the altars of God; and words such as these of the Psalmist would often be on His lips and in His heart: "I will pay My vows unto the Lord, yea, in the presence of all His people; in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord."

It is likely that Jesus had communicated His thoughts and aspirations to His parents. And they in turn may have recounted to Him some of the significant events which had attended His birth and which Mary had laid up in her heart. How far the Scriptures had as yet disclosed to Him the mystery of His earthly manifestation we dare not say. But we have in this incident at least the dawn of His Messianic consciousness. It may have been mediated to Him through such a passage as: "He shall say unto Me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. I also will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."² May we not say that already He knew that in a unique sense God was His Father, and that He was both Servant and Son?

This dedication of self to the work of the Kingdom is harmonious with other disclosures of the divine purpose. Before the ages began He had said, "Lo! I am come . . .

¹ Dalman inclines to this rendering. He understands the phrase to mean the study of the Law and Scripture. *Jesus-Jeshua*, pp. 36, 37.

² Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27. This is spoken with direct reference to the Messiah and is founded on the prophetic utterances of David; see Sam. vii. 12 ff., xxiii. 1 ff.

I delight to do Thy will, O My God." When He had openly assumed His Christhood He announced the design of His advent in flesh: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." And when on that night in which He was betrayed He laid His suffering Manhood on the altar of sacrifice, He turned to the Father, saying, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." With what degree of clearness He foresaw in the days of His youth His appointed sorrows, we have no means of determining, but at least this first formal devotement of Himself to the Father's will may assure us that He would count no labour too strenuous, no burden too heavy, no pang too keen to be undertaken and endured "for us men and for our salvation."

In His passage through the first phases of our human life the Lord Jesus has given us a perfect example of a holy childhood and a youth yielded to all high purposes. Even in His innocent childhood He broke the power of sin, and prevailed to overcome.

And now that He has passed into the glory of God He is still engaged in His Father's business. His visible presence is no longer in an earthly dwelling, but in the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens: there He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Nor will He lay down His heavenly ministry until all His covenant engagements have been performed. He will complete the roll of His elect; He will bring His own redeemed ones to their eternal rest; He will ensure their final and lasting perfection; He will come again, apart from sin, unto salvation.

CHAPTER III

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

"Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy."

—*Measure for Measure.*

"THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," according to St. Mark, was a "voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

The preaching of the Baptist had two distinctive notes: an urgent call to repentance, and the herald's announcement that the King was on His way. All Israel—"Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan"—streamed out to hearken to the prophetic summons, first in the wilderness, then at Bethabara. The flame of revival swept across the land. The purification of society was inaugurated. Like every genuine revival of religion the new movement from its beginnings strove to express itself in terms of good conduct: "John came in the way of righteousness." "What shall we do?" was the agonized inquiry of penitents who craved for amendment of life. And the answer of John was analogous to that of the Hebrew prophets: "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." The preaching of the Baptist prepared the soil for the teaching of Jesus. Into that broken fallow the seed of the kingdom was dropped; there it was nourished, until it ripened into fruitfulness. The first disciples of Jesus and many of those who most earnestly waited upon His word were originally followers of the Baptist.

"Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon Him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."

Our Lord, still labouring at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth, recognized the sign of His high calling, but He did not respond to it hastily. He waited until the first fervour of revival should have made ready a people prepared for the Lord. Then He presented Himself to John. In contemplation of the holiness of Jesus the Baptist was moved to veneration. Humbled under the sense of his own unworthiness, he exclaimed, "I have need to be baptized of Thee." He who had summoned others to repentance was now smitten with shame because of his own imperfection. When he shrank from the duty entrusted to him the Saviour removed his hesitation with the words: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." That Jesus should submit to this ordinance belonged to His Messianic vocation. He came, not as others, making confession of sin, but freely professing holiness of heart and life. And the Father acknowledged the perfectness of His offering. "This," said the Voice out of heaven, "is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Father had with infinite complacency watched the growth to maturity, in wisdom and in grace, of the Son of Mary, and had found no fault in Him. Thirty years, unspotted by the world, are laid on the altar of self-oblation, a holy life in its full perfection is now dedicated to the service of the Kingdom of righteousness.

Himself sinless, He puts Himself in the place of sinners. The rite of admission to the new Kingdom is "baptism unto repentance." He submits to this ordinance of righteousness. Already He has stooped down to bear our

iniquities and to carry them away. He whose incarnation was a sacrifice is now bearing our sins in His own body up to the tree.

But the act of submission on the part of the Saviour to the baptism of John was primarily an acceptance of the will of the Father in entrusting to the Son this sacred commission. The voice of the Father sealed upon Jesus the Isaianic prophecy of the Servant of the Lord. It is probable that our Lord had often meditated on this portion of prophetic Scripture, and had been made aware by the Holy Spirit that it was to find its final application in Himself. The voice from heaven certified to Him the persuasion that He had already set His feet on the path that would lead "to prison, to judgment, and to death."

Having received the seal of baptism, having heard the voice of the Father, Jesus continued in prayer. As He prayed, the Divine Spirit fell on Him, and remained, finding His permanent earthly habitation in the Son of man.

The Gospel according to the Hebrews has a striking sentence in this connection: "It came to pass that when the Lord had ascended from the water, the whole fountain of Holy Spirit descended and rested on Him, and said to Him, 'My Son, in all the prophets I looked for Thee that Thou mightest come, and I might rest in Thee; for Thou art My Rest, Thou art My Son, My First-Born, who art King for evermore.'"¹

We may believe that this endowment of the Spirit cleared our Lord's mind, enlarged His horizon, fortified His resolution, confirmed His graces, and rejoiced His heart. But it was more than a personal endowment; it was a trust committed to Him for the sake of all who should believe. St. John records a saying of the Baptist

¹ Cited by Jerome, on Is. xi. 2. See Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 48.

which is deeply significant: "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it abode upon Him. . . . He who sent me to baptize in water, He said to me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, *this is He that baptizes in Holy Spirit*" (Jn. i. 32, 33, *cf.* xiv. 26). The Spirit came to dwell not in Christ only, but also in His Church.

While each of the Synoptists speaks of the descent of the Holy Dove, St. Mark describes it as conferring a surprising and dominating experience: "And straightway coming up out of the water, *He saw the heavens rent asunder*, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him." St. Peter, viewing this event through the experience of years, sees in it the endowment conferred on Jesus in order to prepare Him for new enterprises (Acts x. 38). Until this hour, so far as the sacred record informs us, the chief duty entrusted to our Lord was to live in purity, and to confirm a holy character amid the maze of tendencies and temptations such as are common to mankind. Solicitations to evil fell upon Him from every quarter, but the touch of defilement was instantaneously repelled from His pure soul; He passed through the myriad allurements of the adversary stainless as a shaft of light.

In the days of His youth our Lord had no official standing in Israel; apparently He had as yet undertaken no religious duty in public, but by a life of self-conquest and undeviating obedience to the holy law He had overcome the world.

Now He is to enter on the vast labour of the redemption of mankind, and a special gift of divine power is committed to Him for this end. We may try to imagine how great the change must have been which befell the Son of Mary when He received the unction reserved for the Messiah; but the silence of Scripture shows that such knowledge is too high for us. A phrase in the First Epistle of John

may help us here. The beloved disciple, speaking of the unction which rests upon believers, describes it as "His anointing." It is probable that the primary meaning of this expression is the glorious truth that now the gift of the Spirit comes to believers in the risen life of the Incarnate Saviour. But it also suggests that there is some analogy between the Redeemer's equipment for service and our investiture to a holy priesthood. When fresh tasks are laid upon us, adequate provision is made for the reinforcement of our weakness. So—on an immeasurably higher stage—when Jesus became the Christ He was divinely empowered: He was fitted for the work of saving a world of sin-sick souls, of building on earth the City of God, and of bringing the maze of time's discords into an eternal harmony.

"And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." It is probable that our Lord felt the need of prayerful meditation upon the crisis which had fallen on Him and the stupendous tasks which now confronted Him. But St. Mark's vivid words imply an eagerness to meet the adversary of souls, and engage in the great conflict which lay before Him. In our Lord's character we are aware of an alertness and power which oppress us at times with awe. His decisions come to us as with an imperial authority—He is the Emperor of men's souls. Now He makes haste to encounter and defy the devil. Among the harsh solitudes of Quarantania He met His adversary and strove against him during forty days. The three temptations which are recorded in the Gospels probably ran through all this period, one solicitation interweaving itself with another, till at the end they gathered force and assailed Him in climax. These temptations came to Him along the lines of His meditation, and had reference to His Messianic calling. He refused to retract His incarnation by calling into His service powers

which His brethren could not employ; He refused to dazzle the people into faith; He refused to compromise with existing usages or to bow before vested interests; He refused to tread the path of least resistance—He chose the way of the Cross.

Satan departed for a season. But the temptation was an agony. As later in the Olive Garden, so now, angels came and ministered unto Him. The victory was complete, but the Conqueror was left prostrate at the point of exhaustion. We shall grievously err if we imagine that because the evil one had nothing in Christ, no ally, no inbred tendency to sin, that temptations fell lightly upon Him. On the contrary, we know that He resisted even to tears and sweat of blood. All the powers of hell rose up in hate against Him, but He triumphed gloriously. The Lamb of the great sacrifice was no other than the "Lion of the tribe of Judah!" Our Lord Jesus passed through more than one agony of trial, in order that we, through Him, might conquer in the fight.

In the power of that victory our Lord returned to Jordan, to found His Church, and afterwards passed in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. From the beginning He seems to have set His face to Jerusalem, that there He might in the power of an Eternal Spirit offer Himself unto God.

From Quarantania Jesus returned to Jordan. He bore the marks of His recent conflict, and the Baptist observing the change in His appearance after those six weeks of trial, looked upon Him, and drawing a text out of Isaiah's "Golden Passional," pointed Him out to his disciples, saying "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Already Jesus had entered on His path of pain. On the banks of the stream of cleansing John and Andrew, Simon and James, and apparently Philip and Nathanael, became disciples of Jesus. The

Church of the New Covenant was founded on the teaching of the Baptist, the son of Zacharias was the latest of the long line of the Hebrew prophets.

It is important, therefore, for us to remember that the life of the Lord, as it presented itself to the first disciples, was framed within the scheme of Old Testament history and prophecy. To show this fully it would be necessary to cite the entire body of the Earlier Scriptures: the Bible is like the temple in Israel, every whit of it utters His glory.

In all its pages, from the first promise spoken in the dishonoured Garden of God, down to the rapturous acclaim of the latest of the canonical prophets, the Old Testament echoes to the sound of unseen feet. A multitude of holy voices announce to the waiting centuries, "Behold, He cometh!" Generation after generation, the hope of Messiah's advent became more sure; each seer in turn discerned under some new aspect the form of that Glorious One who came travelling in the greatness of His strength, battle-soiled and stained with blood, but mighty to save.

The cardinal doctrine of the Old Testament is that a remedy for the ruin of the race has been found. God is able to arrest at their source the poisoned streams which desolate the land. The remedy is to be administered by One who, being a Child of earth, woman-born, shall yet be acknowledged as Jehovah's Fellow.

He is Root and Scion of David's line; a Child of peasant birth, and yet Immanuel, God with us. He is manifested in weakness, subject to reviling, clad in the sad vesture of our mortality. Nevertheless, He is revealed in glory and power, apparelled with strength and sceptred in righteousness. He comes to provide a ransom for transgressors, to deliver the prey from the teeth of the terrible, the captive from the hand of the mighty. In the fullness of the times He will offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin,

presenting Himself before the Father in the power of an eternal priesthood. After death He shall live and reign. A generation shall serve Him; He shall sit as a priest upon His throne; the nations shall be given to Him for a possession and the uttermost parts of the earth for His inheritance. His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and of the increase of His Kingdom there shall be no end.

It was with this exultant hope fulfilling itself in their own experience that the first disciples of Jesus sounded forth the *Eureka*—"We have found the Christ." It was because this ancient promise had sunk so deeply into his spirit that Simon Peter was prepared to make at Caesarea Philippi the good confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And it was with the earlier revelation clear and full before Him that our Lord responded to the adjuration of the High Priest: "Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

When Jesus began to be about thirty years of age we meet Him as a man among His fellows, with no halo of light upon His brow, no veneration attaching to His name. Yet there was in Him something that gave Him a place apart. He stood in His own rank of being. The promise of the Messiah provided a scheme into which each act of greatness, each word of power, might be duly fitted. And so it came to pass that all the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament were realised, each in its own order in Jesus of Nazareth. Yet this fulfilment left anticipation far behind. The titles conferred upon our Lord assumed a rarer significance because they had been offered in tribute to Him. Those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem had saluted the coming One as King of Israel, Saviour of the World, Son of the Blessed; but when He

was revealed every conventional interpretation of these or kindred appellations disappeared. Human language gained a new splendour when it spoke the praises of Jesus. The loftiest predicates had for long trembled on the lips of His disciples, but it was not until His death, His resurrection, and the bestowment of His Spirit had removed all hesitation from their minds, that their conceptions took an absolutely unrestricted range. Then the adoring utterance of Thomas, "My Lord, and my God," anticipated the creed of the Church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit new forms of thought were struck out, new doxologies pealed forth their music, new glories were offered to the Christ, who was confessed as Man of our manhood, yet more than man—Mediator, Redeemer, King, Light of Light, Spirit of Spirit, God of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE SON OF MAN

“And there was great joy amongst them, and they blessed and glorified and extolled, because the name of that Son of Man had been revealed unto them.”

“And He sat on the throne of His glory, and the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man.”

—1 *Enoch*. lxix. 26, 27.

AFTER the Old Testament canon had been closed the expectation of the Promised One did not weaken. In certain circles, on the contrary, it seems to have become more definite and arresting—the whole field of prophecy now lying open. Scattered intimations were drawn together, dark sayings were interpreted in the light of the more general statements, contrasted predictions were taken up, and so the doctrine of the Coming One grew to form.

In the view of the Jewish Apocalyptists He comes, wearing the titles and glories of Jehovah, pre-existent before all ages, an Ambassador from the throne of the Eternal, to execute a divine commission. Yet is He a Child of earth, of the lineage of David, also a Plant of renown sprung from the root of Levi; the Anointed One, the Son of man, the Elect of Jehovah, the Righteous One, a Priest among men, a Redeemer of men, the Defence of Israel, Ruler over the Messianic Kingdom, Prince of the kings of the earth, and Judge of mankind.¹

Of these ascriptions two especially filled the popular view—the Messiah, and the Son of man. The former

¹ See Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, *passim*.

title—Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One—was apparently most in men's minds when our Lord was on earth. In his new joy Andrew "findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto Him, We have found the Messiah (which is being interpreted Christ)." Jesus did not refuse the designation, nor did He at that time claim it. He could do so in Samaria without danger of being misunderstood (Jn. iv. 26); but not in Israel, where the name suggested an armed deliverer, who should break the Roman yoke and make Jerusalem a lady of kingdoms. Only when the disciples had gained a truer conception of the nature of Messiah's kingdom, only when the cross had come into view, did our Lord bind upon Himself this name of power.

But almost from the opening of His ministry He spoke of Himself by a kindred title—"the Son of man."

This appellation occurs more than eighty times in the Gospels—uttered on some forty occasions—always from the lips of the Lord Himself.¹ It comes originally from the protevangel, which tells of the Deliverer's relation to the race, foretells His sufferings, and predicts His ultimate triumph. We shall find these three strains of thought in our Lord's employment of the term as well as in the apostolic use. We meet this title again in the eighth Psalm, which the New Testament applies to Christ.² We encounter it once more in the eightieth Psalm: "Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." But it is likely that our Lord in selecting this title was drawn to it by its occurrence in the prophecies of Daniel, where it is directly associated with the advent of the spiritual Kingdom: "I saw in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of

¹ Jn. xii. 34, is not an exception; the people are quoting His own words.

² 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 9.

man, and he came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The phrase of Daniel, "a son of man," changes in the apocalyptic writings to "the Son of man"; the apocalyptist evidently identifying the mysterious personage whom Daniel foresaw with the Messiah.

Of all the Jewish Apocalyptists the one who most deeply influenced the New Testament writers is the author of the Book of Enoch. His favourite title in the Similitudes (94-64 B.C.) for the promised Deliverer is this, "the Son of man." It is employed by this writer (or group of writers) mainly as predictive of the glory of the Redeemer in His Kingdom of righteousness. But when our Lord assumed the title He gave it the full range which it has in the protevangel.

(a) Our Lord is Man after the divine pattern, Man as God originally fashioned him, and as God meant manhood to be. Because of this He is universal man, embracing humanity in His own person. This does not imply that His manhood was not individual; we do not require to postulate "an abstract universal." It is enough to say with Canon Liddon; "Nothing local, transient, individualizing, national, sectarian, dwarfs the proportions of his world-embracing character; He rises above the parentage, the blood, the narrow horizon which bounded, as it seemed, His human life; He is the archetypal Man, in whose presence distinctions of race, intervals of ages, types of civilization, degrees of mental culture are as nothing."¹ Jesus was neither of the East nor of the West. No racial barrier separated Him from any son of Adam; no singu-

¹ *The Divinity of our Lord*, p. 8.

larity of outlook, no defect of sympathy, restricted His intercourse with His fellows. In his very able work, *St. Paul's Conception of Christ*, Dr. Somerville states this admirably; "Although set in the mould of special circumstances, the life of Jesus issued in an example of goodness that included in it every essential feature of man's nobility, and that had in it nothing national, limited, isolated, or that was adapted to certain persons more than to others. . . . To understand what Christ is, and to have our eyes opened to His greatness, is to feel at the same time, amid all that humbles us in the discovery, this is what I was made for, what I ought to be—to love as Jesus loved, to live as Jesus lived."¹ All men may find in Him the haven of their desires.

(b) Because the fullness of our nature was realized in Him it was fitting that He should by divine appointment become our Representative and Mediator, our High Priest, the Covenant Head of the race. As Archetypal Man He becomes our Representative. As the "nearest of kin" it is His "right to redeem." He entered into our weakness and defeat, that through suffering He might lead us into fellowship with Himself. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." He "came to give His life a ransom for many." Being flesh of our flesh and life of our life, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." It is as Son of man that He is to suffer; this He affirmed in His first Jerusalem ministry, and later; especially after the confession of Simon Peter at Caesarea Philippi: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes;

¹ p. 59, cf. also Westcott, *The Victory of the Cross*, pp. 45, 46: "The human life of Christ . . . is a universal life, universal in character and in experience; . . . universal by the absence of every transitory element; universal by the embodiment of every essential feature of man's nobility. . . . He stands before us in unique, serene, unap-

and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall kill Him, and after three days He shall rise again.”¹

He came under commission from the Father to stand for us in judgment and death, “Him hath God the Father sealed” (Jn. vi. 27). This representation is described principally under three figures.

First as Mediator. This word has in it the hint of a legal tribunal, where the Son of man stands to answer for those whom he represents. As Mediator He has at heart the interests of divine justice, not less than the case of those who supplicate mercy. He is a daysman standing between God and man, laying His hand on each. To the Father He says, “Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom;” to the sinner “I have restored that which I took not away.” He comes to us ministering salvation: our sins are forgiven us for His name’s sake.

Again, as Representative Man He is our High Priest. The point of comparison by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews between the Aaronic priesthood and that of Melchizedek, is that the former is elective, the latter natural. The priest upon His throne is the head of the family, the ruler of the ransomed race. Therefore He has right and power in interceding with the Father on our behalf. He secures our access into the Holiest, and He presents us to the Father with exceeding joy.

Once more, our Lord is the Federal or Covenant Head. The covenant of Sinai was a contract enacted between God and Israel, and it was broken almost as soon as it

proachable, acknowledged completeness, man purely and fully, . . . without one transitory touch of time, or kindred, or aim.”

¹ Lk. xix. 10; Mk. x. 45; 1 Jn. ii. 2; Mk. x. 33, 34; cf. Jn. iii. 14; Mt. xvii. 22, xx. 18, xxvi. 2, 24, 45; Mk. viii. 31 ix. 9, 12, 31, xiv. 41; Lk. ix. 44, xxii. 22, xxiv. 7.

was entered upon. "Behold," says Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet, "I will make a new covenant with you." This covenant is between the Father and the Son. The Father commits to the saving grace of His dear Son a multitude of lost souls; and the Son engages to redeem them when the fullness of time shall have come. As our Saviour sat at His last passover with His disciples, the predestined hour was about to strike: "This," said He, "is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins." They drank of His cup, and thus they were baptized into His baptism. They were, as St. Paul expresses it, "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20).

(c) That the Kingdom was to be entered upon through the sufferings of death, our Saviour, as we have seen, frequently declares. Consider for a moment the nature of the Kingdom of the Son of man as He has made it known.

When in the Fourth Gospel our Lord speaks of His death, He sometimes points to the glory that transfigures it. "The Son of man must be lifted up"; "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know;" "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified . . . I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." Our Lord's exodus from this world was an ascension, a return to His native heaven: "What then if you should behold the Son of man ascending where He was before?" At death He entered into His Kingdom: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Having passed from earth, He shall return to sit on the throne of His glory, and to judge mankind. All judgment is committed to Him because He is Son of man. Is this to assure us of His tenderness, and to encourage us to dismiss over-anxious fears? And yet we must remember that "His eyes are as a flame of fire." When our Lord speaks of His return it is usually in this name:

“In an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh”; “As the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of man be in His day”; “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”; and so in many other passages. But the most impressive employment of this title was when He stood before the High Priest who adjured Him by God, saying “Art Thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus answered: “I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Our Lord's reference is undoubtedly to the prophecy of Daniel, and one may believe that He wished to clear those august Messianic titles, “the Christ,” “the Son of God,” from any taint of cruelty or pride which might have attached to them in the foreview of the Jews of His day. Daniel had seen “the giant forms of empire” appear and pass, the kingdoms of the beasts. Those kingdoms were founded in crude ambition and were cemented with blood. Wars and rumours of wars, pillage, rapine, famine, pestilence, marked their progress. They were military monarchies, of the earth earthly. But as Daniel meditated on the vision another Kingdom came into view, represented not by a bestial form but by a Son of man, standing in the splendour of the Ancient of Days and receiving from the Eternal Love a Kingdom of righteousness and peace: a Kingdom human and divine.¹

¹ Jn. iii. 28, viii. 28, xii. 23, 32, vi. 62, *cf.* i. 51, iii. 13, xiii. 31, 32; Lk. xxi. 36; Jn. v. 27, *cf.* Matt. xvi. 27, xix. 28; Mk. viii. 38 ff; Lk. xii. 40, xvii. 24, xviii. 8, Matt. x. 23, xiii. 41; Lk. xxi. 27; Mk. xiii. 26; Matt. xxiv. 27, 30, 37, 39, 44; Mk. xiv. 61, 62.

CHAPTER V

THE MAN FROM HEAVEN

"This truth of a natural kinship between the human spirit and the Divine, is at once the oldest declaration in the Bible about man, and is implied in every doctrine of the Christian system."

—DR. JAMES ORR.

"**T**HE Second Man is of heaven": this is how St. Paul in his great anthem of the resurrection describes our Lord (1 Cor. xv. 47). He does not mean that there was a pre-incarnate humanity in God; but that the humanity of Jesus, by reason of its union with the Eternal Word, reaches forth into Godhead. The medieval mystics were accustomed to say, "We rise by Jesus Man to Jesus God." In our contemplation of our Lord's humanity we see rays of celestial glory streaming forth from the Manhood; we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel we have an example of the way in which faith in Jesus grew to perfectness. The mendicant whose eyes had been opened was interrogated by the Pharisees regarding his healer. His first answer was, "The man who is called Jesus gave me sight" (verse 11). As he and his inquisitors prolong their argument he rises to a loftier estimate of his benefactor. "He was," says this man, "a prophet" (verse 17). Having reflected longer upon the interview which he had with Jesus, he reaches the conclusion that "He came from God" (verse 33). For this witness he was excommunicated. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and went in

search of him. When He had found him, He asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Lord, I believe," returned the man, and he fell at the feet of Jesus worshipping.

From recognition of the simple manhood of Jesus, this confessor rose to full faith in our Lord's Deity. In much the same way the disciples were led onward until they were able to join in the adoring exclamation of one of their number, "My Lord and my God."

As we have seen, the Gospel of the Infancy plainly indicates that the Holy Child passed into manhood by a truly natural development. The course of that progress is not traced in the Gospels. The Nazareth years are for us silent, possibly because it would be beyond our power to comprehend the sinless growth and the deepening intelligence of Him who is at once Son of God and Son of man. From other places in Scripture we learn that He was tested in all things as we are, and that by the things which He suffered He learned the reality of His subjection under law. Yet, lest we should think of Him merely as one of ourselves, one clear voice breaks the stillness—a Messianic utterance which holds within itself the doctrine of the Divine Sonship: "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

In the experiences which He underwent the manhood of Jesus advanced to completeness. He passed from infancy to maturity, from innocence to inwrought holiness, and at last He relinquished the low estate of His earthly life and entered the realm of glory. It is to this final transition that St. Paul applies the words of the Second Psalm: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts xiii. 33). And now, He is Man of our manhood for ever. He hath a priesthood that is unchangeable.

In this manhood there are features which mark out

Jesus as different from His fellows. Jesus of Nazareth stands alone in His own order.

I

Everything proper to manhood is found in Jesus. Sin is not found in Him, but sin is foreign to our nature. It is a poison which has infected our blood, a tyranny which has established itself in the citadel of our being. Sin excepted, it behoved our Saviour to be made in all things like unto His brethren. He took hold of our entire nature, for (as the Nicene Fathers were accustomed to say) "That which has not been assumed cannot be redeemed."

But this is a difference of tremendous import. He was the only member of our race who evinced no penitence, who asked no forgiveness.

The impression which most vividly stamped itself on the minds of our Lord's contemporaries was His sovereign purity. If in Nazareth they made Him "the song of the drunkard", that in itself was their witness to His perfection. The Baptist shrank from administering the rite of baptism to Jesus and asked instead that that ordinance might be administered to himself by this spotless One. When the call to discipleship came home to Simon Peter he fell at Jesus' feet and exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Our Lord brought into the world a new sense of sin, He created an eager longing for holiness, which could only be met by His forgiveness and the gift of a purity like His own. Men recognised in Him a sovereign goodness that separated Him from sinners, yet drew to Him all who were sick of sin. "He did no sin," said St. Peter, "He knew no sin," was the witness of St. Paul, and "In Him is no sin" was the verdict of the beloved disciple. The disciple who betrayed Him testified to His innocence, the judge who sentenced Him found in Him nothing to condemn, the priests and Pharisees who mocked

Him as He hung upon the cross could find no more evil thing to say of Him than, "He trusted in God"; "He saved others." And all the generations of men from that hour to this have confessed that no higher standard of goodness can be imagined than that which He has set, that no greater attainment of virtue can ever be proposed than to make His footsteps a way to walk in.

But when we claim for our Lord *entire* sinlessness we are necessarily dependent on His own testimony and that of the Father.

Jesus challenged His enemies, whose hearts were full of evil thoughts, and who were ready to say that He had entered into complicity with the evil one, to bring home to His conscience one word or act which had in it the taint of wrong: "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" (Jn. viii. 46). Let them say what they would, His conscience was untroubled. He vouchsafed no confession of wrongdoing or of shortcoming to God or man. On the contrary, He testified of Himself in relation to the Father, "I do always the things that please Him" (Jn. viii. 29). And when He stands before the slowly-opening gates of death, there is no hint of regret, no thought of imperfection in His review of a life unstained and without blemish even under the searching radiance of the Divine omniscience: "Father . . . I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (Jn. xvii. 4).

This self-witness of Jesus was ratified by the testimony of the Father. At Jordan the sinless years of childhood, of youth, and of opening manhood were confessed as being without spot: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (Mk. i. 11.). On the Mountain of Transfiguration the teachings, the toils, and the intercessions of the ministry were searched in the light of God, and approved: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 5). In the temple courts the death lovingly embraced, soon to be trustfully submitted to, was accepted as a holy sacrifice, an offering for sin (Jn. xii. 28). And the resurrection of our Lord from among the dead has affixed the seal of God to this threefold witness of the Father.

II

What seems to have impressed our Lord's contemporaries most was His supernatural power. His miracles are spoken of as His "works," the natural outflow of His life; they are also termed "signs," the disclosures of His nature. In this respect Jesus differed from His forerunner: "John did no miracle," said the people, "but all things that John spake of this man were true." Such powers, however, were not unknown in Israel: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, the man of God from Judah and Isaiah the son of Amoz, had all performed deeds of might. Nor did our Lord in the manner of His working differ in any marked degree from them. Though with supreme authority, He dismissed sickness and spoiled the grave, it was in dependence on the Spirit of the Father, in the power of an all-prevailing intercession, that He wrought those wonders. Yet to His disciples, He entrusted powers like His own: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall in any wise hurt you" (Lk. x. 19). And again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father" (Jn. xiv. 12).

There was a difference. The authority given Him to convey miraculous powers to His disciples, is significant: that which He communicated was His own. Although in the days of His flesh He wrought His mighty works

only in submission to the Father's will, yet He accomplished them by the putting forth of His own power, in the grace of the Divine Spirit. "He was moved with compassion"; "Virtue went out of Him"; "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise".¹ Whereas in the Acts we have utterances like these: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts iv. 10, *cf.* ix. 34, xvi. 18). Even in the deepest humiliation which our Lord underwent the might of an Eternal Godhead dwelt with Him.

This is still more evident when we recall His tremendous utterance: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again, No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have right to lay it down, and I have right to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father" (Jn. x. 18). He has power over His own life, to lay it down and to take it again; now, as always, in submission to the Father; but the right to do this is in Himself. When His adversaries, emboldened by His miraculous workings, clamoured for a "sign" such as had not been paralleled by any of the mighty deeds of heroes or saints in Israel, a sign which should conclusively prove Him to be the Messiah, He offered this only: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." His rising from the dead was the last of His mighty works in the world of men. It was performed in the power of the blood of an eternal covenant, (Heb. xii. 20), by the grace of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 11), in the glory

¹ Mk. i. 41; Lk. vi. 19; Mk. v. 30, vi. 41.

of the Father (Acts ii. 24); but it was accomplished also in the divine authority committed to the Son. It was an act of sovereign Deity.

III

Another distinguishing feature of our Lord's ministry, which brings us to the recognition of His inherent Godhead, was His authoritative revelation of things unseen and eternal.

When we review the course of our Saviour's ministry, we see One who lived by faith as we do, who was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, submissive to the will of God, nourishing His inward life in the exercise of those means of grace which we have been taught to prize. As we consider these things we cannot resist the conclusion that His knowledge in certain directions was restrained. Omniscience, so far as we can apprehend it, does not consist with "naked faith." On the other hand, He was the Word Incarnate—the Self-revelation, the Self-communication of God. He was Israel's Messiah, claiming to be, without doubt or demur, the very Truth, His "Verily" holding the force of the divine Amen. Between these two lines of statement there need be no contradiction. One who knows after another fashion than the All-wise may yet be our infallible Christ.

We can think of three distinct provinces of knowledge spread out before Him.

(a) We may believe that our Lord's knowledge of ordinary things was gained in ways similar to those which we pursue. What the Gospel relates of His childhood and youth was no doubt true of His whole life: "Becoming filled with wisdom"; "He advanced in wisdom."¹ When we remember that our Saviour lived by faith and prayer and the ministration of the Spirit we can understand how it should be written that He "marvelled", "came to

¹ Lk. ii. 40, 52.

know", that He was "bewildered", "amazed", "troubled", "smitten with consternation". Indeed, we feel that had it been otherwise He would not have been Man as we are.

(b) But our Lord possessed also a prophetic insight which enabled Him to read the hearts of men and discern the signs of the times. It would seem as if the entire spiritual world lay open to His gaze. This we judge was by the grace of the Holy Spirit who came upon Him without measure, and made His life in the flesh a mirror of the Living Presence. To this knowledge we can affix no limit other than that which He Himself attested: "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mk. xiii. 32).¹

(c) But there was a higher form of knowledge which, like the sun in the heavens, lightened the vast expanse and drew all things seen and unseen into a glorious harmony.² Perhaps we shall not err if we say that the ground of this knowledge was the beatific vision of the face of God.³ Certain words of fathomless meaning which He uttered point in this direction. "No one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world". To this field of knowledge belong also words more than once repeated: "Where I am". The Son of man on earth was in the Bosom of God.⁴

Such immediate knowledge of the Father and of the Son's relation to Him would throw a divine illumination over all the forms of knowledge possessed by our Lord,

¹ On this text see pp. 163 f.

² See Adamson, *The Mind in Christ*, pp. 79, 80.

³ Aquinas *Summa Theol.* III, ix. 3, xi. 5.

⁴ Mt. xi. 27; Jn. xvii. 5, 24; xiv. 3; cf. Jn. iii. 13.

certifying their utter verity, and binding them into a perfect whole. Thus our Lord speaks of Himself as "the Truth", and an apostle seems to circumscribe reality itself within the mind of the Master: "Ye were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus" (Eph. iv. 21).

PART II
VERY GOD OF VERY GOD

CHAPTER VI

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

"We may dare to believe, magnifying the distinction of our birthright, that we had, in some sense that passeth knowledge, received His nature, before He assumed ours."

—W. B. POPE.

THE mystery hidden in God from ages and from generations, the glory and burden of our common faith, the rapture and amazement of our adoration, is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in flesh.

The first and most bitter contention of the Jews with Jesus originated in His saying that "God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God." This controversy was prolonged throughout our Lord's ministry. A few of His more deliberate statements are: "I and the Father are one"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father"; "The living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father"; "The Father is in Me, and I in Him". These, with other sayings similar to them, are plain and unambiguous, but the most soaring human thought sinks exhausted before their tremendous significance. The utmost that the reverent speculation of the Church has been able to do is to fence out error from that untrodden region in which the fullness of truth dwells. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the First and Sole-begotten. He is in the Bosom of the Father, loving and beloved. He beholds the Father, He knows the Father, He lives by the Father, He reveals the Father. The childlike simplicity of the language veils fathomless abysses of truth. Should one attempt to expound

these amazing utterances, no preparation could be so fitting as the prayer of St. Augustine: "I implore our Lord God Himself, of whom we ought always to think, and of whom we are not able to think worthily, in praise of whom blessing is at all times to be rendered, and whom no speech is sufficient to declare, that He will grant me both help for understanding and explaining that which I design, and pardon if in anything I offend."

The term Incarnation is not found in Scripture. Nevertheless, it is one of those words which the Holy Ghost teaches us. It is, as nearly as possible, the compression into one word of that signal utterance of the Evangelist—"The Word became flesh." After many pauses and experiments theology singled out this text, and placed it as the chief corner-stone of the doctrine of Christ.

It is a familiar saying that all that God does forth from Himself, is done in the Unity of the Godhead. The complete truth of the Person of the Incarnate Word therefore must express the inter-action of Father, Son and Spirit. The Father commissioned the Son, the Spirit formed the Sacred Humanity, and the Son came.

I

The Father Commissioned the Son. In words which sound like a cry from the Being of God our Saviour, oblivious of His perplexed hearer and forgetful of the drear shadow of the cross which a moment before had rested on His spirit, being "lost in wonder, love and praise," exclaimed, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Is there not in these words a feeling of effort and burden, a hint of loss and separation entailed upon the Father Himself? For this gift of grace

involves a deprivation within the Godhead, a sacrifice (as it were) by the Father:¹

“He who His Son most dear and loved
gave up for us to die.”

More than a score of times in the Gospels Jesus affirms that the Father had sent him; that He came not of Himself but by divine commission.

It was fitting that He who was to come forth at the bidding of God, to learn obedience by the things which He suffered, should be not the Father but the Son—that Person in the ever-blessed Trinity regarding whom filial subordination can be affirmed. But there is something in the Incarnation of the Word which passes far beyond the filial subordination of the Second Person in the Godhead to the Fountain of the Trinity. And this suggests a provisional answer to a question which is often asked, Would the Son of God have taken flesh, even though there had been no sin to put away? Would He not, in any event, have come to reveal the Father, and as Representative and Head of the race to place the crown on the head of creation? This was a favourite speculation in Puritan days. Peter Sterry, Court Chaplain to Cromwell, says: “The root of every man is Christ, and every life is watered with His blood.” It is enough for us to say that, as far as Scripture informs us, man is never contemplated apart from a Redeemer: the revelation of God which Jesus Christ came to bring is the revelation of One whose garments are red, whose heart is wounded, whose throne is shadowed by the doom of death—the God and Father of a slandered and dying man. Luther says, “It was not humiliation for the Son of God to assume flesh; it was honour.” But this is only one aspect of the truth. The Incarnation was a self-humbling; it was the prelude to

¹ Rom. iv. 25, viii, 32.

the cross. In itself it was an act of renunciation. What of honour and renown lay concealed in it is to be discerned only in the light which streams from the parted storm-cloud above Calvary.

In the unbeginning eternity the Son was sanctified and sealed as the Redeemer of God's elect. The Father committed to Him a multitude of lost souls to be His joy and crown; and a book of remembrance was written before Him, ere ever the earth was. In the eternal life of the Godhead the Father ordained the Son, consecrating Him for His advent and His passion, for the manger and the grave.

Then, when the waiting ages had been fulfilled, God in love immeasurable, unutterable, "gave His only begotten Son". Is there not in these words a feeling of effort and burden, a hint of loss and separation entailed upon the Father Himself? Some ancient heretics taught that the Father suffered and not the Son; are there not mysterious utterances of Scripture which seem to imply that the Father suffered with the Son? The truth is hidden from us in viewless distances: we can only grope with lame hands of faith in the darkness of the infinite, if haply we may feel after God.

We must be careful in choosing our words, even when we try to express that which has been revealed, for correlative and contrasted truths lie near one another. We know that when the heavens opened above the plains of Bethlehem, the Father bent over the cradle in the cattle-stall. When the Redeemer went forth to teach and heal, the Father accompanied Him. When Jesus climbed the mountain to pray, the Father cast around Him the curtains of His tent. When on Golgotha the Sufferer bowed His head upon His finished work, He died into the arms of God. "He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone."

II

The Spirit formed the Humanity of the Word. The Gospels leave altogether to our imagination the journey of Joseph the carpenter, with Mary his espoused wife, from Nazareth to Bethlehem. They both were of the house and lineage of David, and they went to enrol themselves under the royal name as subjects of the Roman power. In that hour the sceptre departed from Judah, and Shiloh came. The travellers toiled along the rugged limestone paths until, late at night, they came to the ancient homestead of Jesse which David gave to Chimham the son of Barzillai, and which, as long ago as the days of Jeremiah, had become a caravanserai or inn. The hostelry was already full, and the newcomers had to seek shelter in the recess which ran back under the rock. There, where the cattle were penned, the Virgin Mother brought forth her firstborn Son, and having wrapped Him in swaddling bands, laid Him in the manger. The scene was impressive in its simplicity, affecting in its poverty. But, though men were heedless, angels rejoiced, and heaven swept down in melody and light to our weary, outworn earth. The Word had become flesh, the Son of God had entered our nature.

“It was the birth of a new earth,
Not of a little child.”

The entire humanity of Jesus, His true body and His reasonable soul, were generate yet created. He belonged to the race, but He first came into it. From another root He was grafted on to the stem of Jesse. He did not ascend by ordinary development in the progress of humanity, He was the Firstborn of creation. He accepted heredity, but broke the entail of sin.

The act of Incarnation was rendered possible to the Eternal Word by the Creative Spirit who prepared that fair humanity, and brought it as a Bride to our Adam.

The Sonship in flesh of our Lord Jesus, not less than His eternal Sonship, is from the Father, but this act of paternity was mediated through the Divine Spirit, for, as we have just reminded ourselves, all the actings of the Godhead forth from Itself are with consent and in co-operation of the Holy Three. This is expressed in the angel's words: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." Or, to put it otherwise: the infinite power of God shall over-shadow thee in the coming upon thee of the Holy Ghost. The term "come upon thee" is that which is employed in Acts i. 8, to describe the descent of the Spirit: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "The Holy Ghost," says Owen, "is the immediate, peculiar, efficient cause of all external divine operations." This is the initial act of the new creation. It is an act that is concealed within the radiance of that light which is inaccessible and full of glory, an act that is performed in the secrecy of the divine wisdom. But there are two things which we may venture to assert—the humanity of our Lord was created in innocence and pureness; and it was made recipient of grace in its fullness.

We may add this also: Our Lord becomes our kinsman in this, that He was born in the grace and by the power of the Holy Spirit, even as we are in our new birth, that He might be the First-born among many brethren. We are made partakers of the Divine Nature by the operation of that Spirit through whom our Lord became man.

III

The Son came. We are now in a position to realise the significance of that saying of Jesus, "I proceeded forth

and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me." These words remind us of the land that is very far off.

"The King there in His beauty
Without a veil is seen."

He came from a land beyond the stars, from a heaven above the heavens. It was, says Ralph Erskine, a perilous road by which He came—it was by water and by blood—but He accomplished His course. He did not pause until He was able to say, It is finished. We may gather up the evangelic teaching on this majestic theme in three short statements: He came forth from God; He came down from heaven; He came in the flesh.

He came forth from God. In the beginning the Word was with God; in the fullness of the times He came to dwell with men. The Latin doctors were accustomed to say, and the words may serve to indicate the truth, enigmatic though they sound, "He came forth from, but He did not leave the Bosom of God." This coming forth was the self-emptying of which St. Paul speaks when he says that, being and continuing to be in the form of God, He assumed the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. In doing so He divested Himself of that which He might have reckoned as a prize to be held fast—the being with God on equal terms, in holy, blissful, unshaded communion, with no distance or severance interposing to hold back the love of the Father. Was it not of this that He spoke in His high-priestly prayer? "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." And again, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

It was not that the Father loved the Son less after He entered into His estate of humiliation: He was never *more* beloved than when He was plunged in overwhelming agony.¹ But He had come forth from God. He had come out from the glory of the Presence. His holy fellowship with the Father became less radiant, less immediate, less divinely sweet.

Again, *He came down from heaven*. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. He laid aside the splendours and prerogatives of Deity, the exercise of infinite power, the disclosure of supreme majesty, the insignia of God. And He became poor.

“Our God, heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign.

In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.”

This rude blazon of poverty was the “sign” of His coming. He *came down* to live the divine life under creature conditions, within the limits of finite and measured existence. He allowed the operations of grace to be hindered in relation to Himself, so that at times He was not able to do the things that He would, and was finally constrained to impress on the unwilling minds of His disciples this truth, “It is expedient for you that I go away.” By His return to the unimpeded life of the Sole-begotten He would empower His Church to achieve greater visible results than He himself had won.

¹ Cf. Jn. x. 17.

Once more, *He came in the flesh*. Even before the first century had quite run its course the true humanity of Jesus had become unreal to the thoughts of many. Men spoke of an ideal and spiritual Christ, and denied the Virgin-born. And the beloved disciple said, "Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus," that is, Jesus come in the flesh, "is not of God." "This," he adds, "is the spirit of the antichrist." Since then there have been times in the history of the Church when the recollection of the divine glory of the Redeemer has seemed to absorb the Manhood. Bishop Gore tells of a Jesuit doctor, De Lugo, who compiled a life of Jesus, not from the Gospels, but from the decrees of Councils and the rescripts of popes; and in that life the thought of the Humanity was almost lost.¹ But Scripture, with most patient insistence, teaches that the Incarnate Saviour was very man. In all things He was made like unto His brethren. He was lonely and weary, hungry and athirst, perplexed, dismayed, distressed. He bore the contradiction of sinners; He was pained by the ingratitude of men; He suffered, being tempted. He learned obedience by the things which He endured; He was made perfect by the sorrows through which He passed. Therein the mystery of God was fulfilled. It

"Is darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart."

Claudius of Wandsbeck exclaims, "One might be content to be broken on the wheel, merely to believe it true." It is true. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ." And He who is faithful and of verity testifies, "If it were not so, I would have told you."

¹ *Bampton Lectures*, p. 151.

Dr. Alexander of Armagh reminds us that perfume exhales not merely from the bloom of an odoriferous plant, but also from its leaves, its bark-scales, its root-fibres. In like manner, it is not merely in the great Christological passages, but in every word and action of the Lord that witness is borne to His true Deity, His pure Humanity, and His undivided Person.¹ In Galilean accents He utters the eternal I AM. His poverty is the enrichment of the world. His weakness becomes strength as of adamant to His people. With tears He raises the dead. In agony and amazement He bursts the caverned prison of death, and tramples Satan underfoot.

“He hell in hell laid low;
Made sin, He sin o’erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so;
And death by dying slew.”

Very God of very God, Man of one substance with us,
One Christ.

¹ *The Word Became Flesh*, p. 7. cf. “The Selfsame was in the Father’s bosom, and in the Virgin’s womb; in a mother’s arms, and on the wings of the wind. . . . He was laid in the tomb, and He spread out the heavens as a curtain.”

—PROCLUS *Orat.* 1. 9.

CHAPTER VII

OUR LORD'S SELF WITNESS

"Christianity is entirely based upon Christ's consciousness of Himself, and it is the heroism of faith to rest upon the extraordinary testimony which this Being gave to Himself."

—DR. GODET.

WITH the Church universal we confess Jesus of Nazareth to be "Very God of Very God." The Divine nature and our human nature are diverse, but not disparate. What Bishop Westcott was accustomed to call the "Protevangelion" assures us that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" (Gen. 1. 27). It is in view of this relation that we see the Eternal Word vesting and veiling Himself in our manhood, becoming what He was not, without ceasing to be what He was. It is within this relation also that we are able to conceive of Christ dwelling in us as the supreme principle of our life. But to assert with many modern writers "the fundamental and essential unity" of nature human and Divine is, by an inexact use of terms, to open a wide door to error. God is so near to us that we are enfolded in His very being; but He is still God, and we are men.

What the doctrine of the incarnation teaches is that the Divine and the human in Christ consist in the unity of His personal existence. When He says, "I am the living One, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore," we feel no jar as if we had passed from one plane of being to another. From the Bosom of God, to the Manger and the Cross, and up to the Throne,

the great "I AM" persists in the simplicity and fullness of His self-manifestation. We cannot therefore distinguish Christ in His human nature and in His Divine, as if these two modes of His existence could be considered apart. Our Lord is altogether human, altogether Divine. "The Word became flesh."

Therefore we look for evidence of the Deity of Jesus in every act and aspect of His earthly life. But it is especially along two lines of evidence that the Deity of Jesus becomes demonstrable to us—His personal Testimony, and His Work of Redemption. These are confirmed by the Witness of the Church.

It is not enough to assess the greatness of Jesus Christ by measuring the impression which He made on His contemporaries, or even the shadow which He casts upon the face of time. One might as well calculate the fiery energies of the sun by estimating the brightness and fruitfulness of a summer day. We must ascend from human testimony to the Self-witness of the Lord: "What sayest Thou of Thyself?"

When we speak of the Self-witness of Jesus we gather testimonies from all the four evangelists. One need make no apology for accepting as authentic utterances of the Lord Jesus the great Christological affirmations of the Fourth Gospel. What Harnack says of one of these we may say of all: "This is certainly overheard from Jesus' own consciousness. Here all investigation must call a halt."¹ The sayings of Jesus are authenticated by the Holy Spirit. The highest criticism must ground its "weapons of precision" at the feet of Christ.

To present the full evidence of our Lord's consciousness of personal union with our Father, one would require to copy out afresh the Fourfold Evangel. It will be sufficient to mention a few cardinal passages.

¹ *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 82. But see Chapter XXI.

The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of the ethical teaching of the Old Testament. And our Lord, with all His profound reverence for Scripture, holds Himself towards it with a certain freedom. He clears away rabbinical glosses (Matt. v. 43); He affirms the transitory and imperfect nature of the Civil law in Israel (Matt. v. 31); He shows that the divine pronouncement reaches beneath the letter of the Statute and searches the thoughts and intents of the heart (Matt. v. 21). He brings all life under His personal rule; the test of conduct is "for My sake" (Matt. v. 11). And as He unrolls the commandment, which is exceeding broad, He silently ascends the throne of God, and assumes the judgment of souls: "Then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity'" (Matt. vii. 23). He is not only the Judge of mankind: He is the heaven of the blessed, and absence from Him is hell.

There are numerous passages in the Gospels in which our Lord claims the right to exercise sovereign power over the lives of His followers. They are to render Him unquestioning obedience, to place their feet in His footprints, to be conformed to Him in disposition and conduct, to be willing to suffer and die for His sake, to withdraw if need be from earthly affection and to sunder every tie of friendship and blood at His call. He requires unmeasured love, undeviating discipleship, unqualified adherence. All our life is to be laid freely within His blessed and holy will. Who but one holding divine authority would dare to say to His fellows, "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it?"

When our Lord was about to leave Capernaum, His own city, His heart was deeply stirred, and He gave utterance to some of the weightiest words which He has spoken: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and none knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither

doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27, *cf.* Lk. x. 22). Of this saying Dr. Plummer asserts that "it contains the whole of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel," and Dr. Denney similarly asserts that "there is nothing in the New Testament which carries us further than this; and nothing more is wanted to justify completely the attitude of Christian faith in Jesus."¹

Jesus was repeatedly greeted as the Son of God and this on His own authority (Matt. xxvii, 43). In one of the most solemn moments of His life He asserted the Divine dignity of His Sonship (Matt. xxvi, 63, 64). He died upon it. The Jews understood that He assumed this title in an absolute sense: "He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." He received worship which is due only to Deity. He speaks of His perpetual presence in the Church. He foretells His return in the glory of the Father. And He invites faith in Himself as in God (Jn. xiv. 1).

Let us dwell a little more fully on these points.

(a) The pre-existence of the Son is implied in many of the Synoptic disclosures of our Lord's filial consciousness, but it is not explicitly set forth in sayings which they report. For definite statements we have to go to the Fourth Gospel. The undernoted passages may be cited as leading instances of His teaching.

In Proverbs xxx we find words which may be thus translated: "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh; the oracle. Man saith, I have wearied myself, O God. I have wearied myself, O God, and am become faint; for I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man: And I have not learned wisdom, neither have I the knowledge of the Holy One. Who hath

¹ "He who understands these sayings," says Dr. Sanday, "has found his way to the heart of Christianity."

ascended up into heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in his garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

In His discourse with Nicodemus our Lord referred to this passage. One notices the reference to water and to the Spirit, to the ascent and the descent, to the Heavenly Father and the Son. But our Lord made an important change in the text which he quotes. Agur says, "Who hath ascended up into heaven and descended?" Jesus says, "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven." Agur thinks of one who by virtue and divine grace will rise from our ordinary manhood into a divine relation, and who, returning, will tell us of things as yet unrevealed. But Jesus speaks of Himself as one whose home is in heaven; He has come down to reveal to us the Father, and He will return again to the eternal mode of existence, though even now His life is hidden in God in the heavenly places.

In the discourse in the Synagogue of Capernaum Jesus re-affirms what Micah had foretold of the Messiah, that His goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. "For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven and giveth life unto the world. . . . I am the bread of life," "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me". "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn. vi. 33, 38, 51).

In His encounter with the Jews in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, in reply to what appears to have been a slur on their part on the manner of His birth, Jesus said plainly: "I came forth and am come from God"; and again, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. viii. 42, 58).

Let us take only one other example: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (Jn. xvi. 28).

We cannot read these and similar passages without being aware that our Lord was conscious of His pre-incarnate life within the Godhead.

(b) Bishop Butler, author of "The Analogy of Religion" was accustomed to speak of God as "the Moral Governor." To his mind that was the loftiest ascription which he could offer to the All-wise, All-holy One. And our Lord claims this designation for Himself. He speaks with supreme authority, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, but I say unto you." "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock." "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." There is no uncertainty, no weighing of probabilities, no deference to authority. His word is absolute truth from which there can be no appeal: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." There is a still more startling asseveration: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him at the last day." But more solemn and urgent still, He who utters those words of truth is Himself the Judge, who will render unto every man according to his deeds: the Father has "committed all judgment unto the Son . . . because He is the Son of man." He is the Master of the house who rises up and shuts to the door. To those who come vainly seeking an entrance He has only one reply, "I know you not."

When He is seated on the throne of His glory all nations shall be gathered before Him, and He shall with unerring justice apportion to each soul of man his eternal destiny. The criterion of His judgment is the relation of men to Himself: "Ye did it unto Me: Come, ye blessed of My Father." "Ye did it not unto Me: Depart." How unspeakably solemn is the claim to be Judge of all mankind, to weigh all actions and words in the scales of truth, to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, to pierce to the dividing of soul and spirit, to open the Kingdom of heaven to all believers, and to refuse entrance to all who are not openly acknowledged as His own. Yet this claim our Lord again and again without hesitation or explanation puts forth. He is the Moral Ruler of mankind. "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge; we therefore pray Thee help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood."

(c) Our Lord offers Himself to us as the object of faith. The unseen God who dwells in light that is inaccessible and full of glory is made known to us in Christ. The faith that saves must of necessity terminate on God; therefore when Jesus demands our credence He asserts His true Deity. "Believe in God," He says, "believe also in Me."

The Greek thinkers pictured the questing soul as lingering on the shore of a measureless sea looking for, but scarcely expecting, an authentic word from God. A Messenger from the Court of heaven has come bringing to us, not in word only, but in the perfection of His holy character, the revelation of the Father. In Christ all moral virtue reaches its fullness. He is purity without stain, truth without evasion, rectitude that is flawless, love that knows no limit. When we lift these and kindred virtues into the infinite we see them as attributes of Deity. So that, when we look upon Jesus we say, He is the Image of the Father; He is the Mirror of God.

The Jews said to Jesus, challenging Him, "Who art Thou?" He replied, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning"—*Essentially I am that which I speak unto you.* Jesus is what He says; the truth of His lips corresponds to the truth of His life. His words frame His life; His life is the revelation of the Father.

Faith in the Saviour is described under different figures. It is a coming to Him: "He that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and He that believeth in Me shall never thirst." It is adhesion to Him as by a disciple to a master: "Follow Me," "Learn of Me." It is rest in His love, repose on His finished work: "Abide in Me." The benefits which come to us through faith in Christ are such as these: The forgiveness of sins, the grace of regeneration, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Triune God, power over all power of the enemy, quietness of heart amid life's alarms, access to God in prayer with assurance of being heard, illumination on the way that leads home. All these are enrichments of grace conferred upon us by one who is Very God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORK OF REDEMPTION

“Jesus, my God! I know His name,
His name is all my trust;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.”

—I. WATTS.

IT is important to observe that the clearest assertions of His very Deity were uttered by Jesus in confirmation of the Gospel message—in the interest of the salvation of souls. One might even venture to say that He is concerned with the acknowledgment of His Divine origin chiefly because it is in the recognition of this truth that He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him.

In the third chapter of John our Lord leads Nicodemus, step by step, to the full understanding of His mission. He first proclaims the inevitable necessity of regeneration; next, He shows that the new birth comes through the Holy Spirit; then He leads up to the Great Sacrifice, in the grace of which the Spirit is to come; lastly, He goes back to His eternal being with God before all ages, and reveals to us the unbeginning love of the Father. On this basis He issues His invitation to the sinner to believe and live.

In the tenth chapter of the same Gospel Jesus entitles Himself the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. In the power of that death He gathers His redeemed ones: “My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me.” He gives to them eternal life. Their security rests in this, that they are in His hand. But it is a hand of divine power; being in His hand they are also in the Father’s hand: “I and the Father are one.”

In the fourteenth chapter our Lord is shown to us as seated in the Upper Chamber in Jerusalem. The symbols of His broken body and outpoured blood have been laid on the table. He has just uttered the words of institution which tell of remission of sins certified in a covenant sealed with blood. He is about to consecrate Himself for His cross, His thoughts are turning towards Gethsemane, presently his fainting feet will toil up the slope of Calvary. Listen to His word! "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." It is not merely that He resembles God; He is God.

We should be much affected in remembering that the greatest desire in the mind of the Saviour is the salvation of sinners. In the Gospel Records everything has been subordinated to this. Countless works of wonder and unnumbered words of power of the Son of Man are allowed to float down the stream of time into oblivion, in order that certain selected sayings and incidents which are provocative of faith may be remembered and diligently studied: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ; and that believing ye may have life in His name" (Jn. xx. 30, 31).

It is by way of the Cross that we come to faith in His Person. "The right approach to the Christology of the New Testament," writes Dr. T. K. Mozley, "is through its soteriology."¹ The redeeming work of Jesus is certain evidence that He is Divine.

The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. His coming to earth, His entrance into flesh, was a sacrifice. When He embraced the limitations of our finite existence, when He humbled Himself to be partaker in our obedience, when He stooped to become Servant unto all—being as He was, and is, and shall be, God over all, blessed

¹ *Mysterium Christi*, p. 171.

for ever—He had already entered on “the royal way of the holy cross.”

His sinlessness was not merely a gift of grace, it was a triumph of faith. He was tempted in all points as we are, and He suffered being tempted. Born into our loss, the Lamb of patient endurance prevailed to overcome, and was revealed to principalities and powers as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Conqueror over sin and death and hell. From the Cradle to Quarantania, from Quarantania to Gethsemane, our Lord was working out a perfect righteousness that was finally achieved on Calvary.

This was a victory without parallel in all the ages of time. Our Saviour “dried corruption’s fountain up, cut off the entail of sin.” He smote the beast of hell by His Cross and crushed under His wounded heel the adder’s brood. He made an end of sin and finished the transgression. This work proclaims our Lord to be Divine. His other wonders merge into this, as the star-light into the dawn. He wrought miracles, so did Moses; He raised the dead, this Elijah also did; He unveiled the future, but the Hebrew prophets had done so centuries before; He uttered words that “wander through eternity,” but every one of these sayings was rooted in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But no son of man, other than He, was able, on the plane of our defeat, to retrieve the disaster of the Fall, and re-open Paradise.

The victory of the Redeemer was wrought out in two spheres—the earthly and the heavenly.

(a) The life of Jesus between Jordan and Golgotha was one unintermittent campaign against the evil one. On the mountain of temptation our Lord met His adversary and ours in the place of our defeat. He met and foiled the solicitations of Satan, not in the garden of all created good, but in the wilderness, among the wild beasts, under the provocation of biting hunger. Our first parents fell in

one swift hour of temptation; our Lord endured during the forty days of that fierce onslaught, and afterwards in similar encounters. Once, at least, at a later time He felt the air grow chill and forbidding: "The prince of this world cometh," He said, "and hath nothing in Me." At another time, as He prayed, victory was vouchsafed, and He beheld Satan falling as lightning from Heaven. When the multitudes acclaimed Him King of Israel He put aside the proffered crown, and in the night solitude on the mountain yielded Himself anew to the Father for His cross and pain. A sudden blast of temptation which came from the arch-enemy himself, though Simon Peter was the means of its conveyance to Him, was gloriously overcome on the Mount of Transfiguration where He gave Himself afresh to the sufferings of death, and instructed Moses and Elias, saints of the older covenant, in the nature and purpose of the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. In Gethsemane the fight attained its utmost fury. Our Lord strove with strong crying and tears, wrestling with an unseen adversary even to sweat of blood. His lips wet with the draught of that bitter cup, He lifted up His pure soul to God, saying, "Father . . . Thy will be done." But the last, the decisive, battle was His deadly contest amid the darkness of Calvary. Then faith attained its perfect triumph. Our Lord was alone—those for whom He was pouring out His life were clamouring at the crossfoot, turning the cry of His last agony into scorn: the gates of darkness were unloosed, and all the powers and hate of hell were arrayed against the Son of God: while, as Isaiah tenderly says, "there was as it were the hiding of the Face from Him."¹ The light of the Father's love was unable to break through the shroud of sin that enwrapped the Redeemer's soul. It was as if God had withdrawn Himself

¹ Isa. liii. 3.

to an inconceivable remoteness. There was nothing in earth or heaven for our Immanuel to cling to, except the covenant ordered and sure. To this He appealed; He held fast His courage and refused to despair. Reaching up through the midnight gloom, He laid hold of the strong hand of God and clasped it, crying, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" It was faith's ultimate victory, the highest achievement in the history of mankind; faith out of the gulfs of darkness ascending to the highest heavens. It annihilated the tyranny of the evil one, shattering his throne. Then might the delivered soul of Jesus have re-echoed the words which He uttered in view of this hour: "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

"To Thee, and to Thy Christ, O God,
We sing, we ever sing;
For He invaded death's abode,
And robbed him of his sting.
He plunged in His imperial strength
To depths of darkness down,
And brought the trophy up at length,
The judged usurper's crown."

(b) This divine victory, achieved on earth, registered itself in the heavenly sphere. Contemplating His labours and His suffering as ended, our Lord presents Himself before the Father: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. . . . And now come I to Thee." He Himself brings His redeeming work to the Throne of God. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes our Lord's self-presentation to the Father the basis of His intercession: "Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, now to appear before the

face of God for us" (ix. 24). But those words of our Lord which we have just quoted stay on the threshold of His heavenly ministry; they point to the culmination of His sacrificial offering. As in the levitical ceremonial the blood shed on the great altar was borne by the High Priest into the Holiest, and was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat which symbolised Jehovah's Throne of grace, so the Saviour, if we may use a strong figure of speech, hallowed by frequent use, offered His own blood to God. He ascended from the cross, and advanced to the midst of the Throne, wearing His priesthood, a Lamb as it had been slain—He came saying, "I have restored that which I had not taken away. Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." The Father accepted the sacrifice, and said, "My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."

As soon as we begin to think of it we realise that the redemptive work of Jesus *must* have a Godward reference. It was in the love of God that the act of divine reconciliation began: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ Jesus, whom God set forth in propitiatory power, through faith, by His blood, effects the reconciliation. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."¹ The Father gave the Son, sent Him forth under a divine commission, anointing Him with the Holy Ghost and power. And when our Lord had fulfilled the commandment He offered Himself as a sacrifice to God. The Father was satisfied. It may be that we use this word "satisfaction" too narrowly, as if it were merely a placating of the divine justice. That it surely was, but it was more. As every attribute of Deity was engaged in the work of redemption, so every aspect of the Divine nature found satisfaction in the Cross of Christ. When the Redeemer

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19; cf. Rom. iii. 25.

cried, It is "finished," the thrice-holy Lord rested in His love. The Suffering Saviour had transacted with God regarding sin. As the divinely-commissioned Redeemer He so identified Himself with sin—our sin and the sin of the whole world—that He was "made sin" for us. He took our sinfulness to the cross and carried it away. Whither? He bore it into a land not inhabited. He removed it from us as far as east is from the west. He buried it in the garden-tomb. He cast it into the depths of the divine mercy. He quenched it in the furnace of the divine purity, where it was annihilated in the cleansing flame that consumed the sacrifice.

The greatness of this achievement may be measured by its effects. Our Lord was laid in the grave, pale but victorious, to rest on the Sabbath Day. When the grey light of morning began to steal into the rock-hewn sepulchre the Saviour rose from among the dead in the power of His own accepted sacrifice. From the shoulder of Olivet He passed into the immediate presence of the Father, "in the blood of an eternal covenant." As the Lamb slain He took the title-deeds of the forfeited inheritance, and sat down upon the mediatorial throne. All providences pass under His feet. All judgment is committed unto Him, because He is Son of man. And because He has magnified the law and made it honourable, He ever liveth to make intercession for us. The donation of the Spirit comes to us in virtue of the Redeemer's Cross. His return in the end of the age, apart from sin unto salvation, is made secure to the Church by reason of His earthly victory. And to all eternity the light of heaven is the glory of the Lamb once slain.

Now He comes to us bearing trophies from the field of war, gifts from the Eternal Love. Of these two are specially emphasised in Scripture—forgiveness and holiness. We are forgiven for His name's sake; we are holy in Him.

CHAPTER IX

THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

(a) JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER

"This Epistle contains more references to the discourses of Christ, and more quotations of His words, than all the other Apostolic Epistles put together."

—DR. DÖLLINGER.

EARLY Christian writers tell us that James the Lord's brother was a Nazirite from birth, being dedicated to the service of God by his mother; that he grew up a strict Jew; and that, even after he had come to faith in Jesus, he remained a member of the Jewish Church, spending much time in the temple in prayer and in intercourse with those who frequented the sacred courts. At the feasts in particular Israelites of the Dispersion came from many lands with a lively interest in the story of Jesus. They brought their questionings to James: "What", said they, "Is the door (the instruction) of Jesus?" He answered, "The door of Jesus is salvation." Jesus is Saviour. This Epistle is addressed to these inquirers, and is thought by many to be the earliest New Testament Writing. The inquirers have returned to their homes, but James desires still to remain in communication with them: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." (i.1). Already, perhaps some ten or fifteen years after the death of Jesus, He is named as on an equality with God.¹

¹"Taking into account these various considerations we may perhaps name the year 40 A.D. as the earliest, and 50 A.D. as the latest, at which this Epistle could have been written." Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James*, p. cxxvi.

The use of the word "Lord" in this Epistle is instructive. Sometimes it is employed to indicate the Jehovah of the Old Testament: "Their cries have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (v. 4). Almost immediately after these words we read: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord" (v. 7). It is He, Jesus, who bears Jehovah's name, who has promised the crown of life (i, 12); it is He who orders our earthly course (iv. 15), to whom prayer is offered (v. 14), by whom healing is performed (v. 15).

In emphasizing the fact that there is no respect of persons with God, and that in His eyes the poor are as sacred and dear as the rich, he recalls the lowliness of the earthly life of Him who was "our Lord Jesus Christ of glory" (ii, 1). In later Jewish writings Glory had become a proper name: "the Glory" was one of the titles of the Almighty.¹

"Jesus of Glory," therefore, is Jesus the Son of God.

Whereas the Christ-doctrine of this Epistle is already fully developed, one may be surprised that it is not more patently set forth. When we read the Epistle carefully we seem to find the reason. It is addressed, not to a Christian Church but to God-fearing ones, devout Jews of the Dispersion, who meet in synagogue with other Jews, and in many cases have not as yet made an open confession of their faith in Jesus. It seems to be the aim of the apostle to lead them to faith in the Redeemer through their own Old Testament Scriptures. "Look," he seems to say, "in the mirror of the Word, and the Truth will appear" (i. 22-27). This is in the same plane of instruction with the saying of Jesus, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (Jn. vii. 17).

¹ Cf. Ps. lxxxv. 9; 1 Enoch xiv. 20, cii. 3; Test. Levi iii. 4, etc.

(b) SIMON PETER

"The Gospels paint him as a man of slow understanding, but strong conviction, of tender, but not demonstrative feeling, with an exquisitely delicate conscience, and a deep sense of the majesty of God."

—DR. BIGG.

IT is probable that Simon Peter was a man in middle life when Jesus called him to be a disciple. Naturally therefore, he would emphasize those aspects of the Saviour's Person which had entered into his mature experience, and be less apt than some of the others to assimilate new views of truth. He would live in the recollection of those three wonderful years of fellowship with Jesus. Accordingly, though this Epistle may have been written during the closing years of St. Paul's ministry, it belongs to the same stratum of the Church's testimony as the "teaching of the apostles", of which we shall have occasion to speak.¹

Simon's chastened and gracious spirit is radiant with the remembrance of His Saviour. One feels the heart-beat of love in words like these: "Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" "Who His own self carried up our sins in His body to the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed"; "Ye were going astray like sheep, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

The pre-existence of the Christ is affirmed with sufficient clearness, though not as sharply as in the writings of St. Paul or St. John: "Christ who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at

¹ In Part IV, Chapter I.

the end of the times for your sake" (1 Pet. i. 20). It was His Spirit who inspired the prophets and opened their eyes to behold Him treading the sorrowful way and reaching forth to His crown (i. 11). It was Christ Himself who, in the Spirit of the Father, by the lips of Noah, strove with the ungodly before the Flood (iii. 18-20). His sufferings, which St. Peter beheld—he speaks of them as if he had taken his place under the cross with the Maries and the beloved John (v. 1)—were sacrificial: they are narrated in terms of Isaiah's passion-story (ii. 24, 25); His afflictions were on our behalf (ii. 21); they were an offering for sins made once for all (iii. 18); He was God's appointed Lamb, without blemish and without spot (i. 19), by whose blood sprinkled upon our souls we are sanctified (i. 2). Having borne our sins to the place of death He was raised in the divine faithfulness, to bring a living hope to His people (i. 3, 4). He is now on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (iii. 22). His are the glory and the dominion unto the ages of the ages; thus God is glorified in Him (iv. 11), and we are glorified together with Him (v. 10).

In the opening verses of the Epistle our Lord Jesus Christ, as He is entitled, bearing the Old Testament name of Messiah and wearing the vesture of Jehovah, is placed as if on equal terms in union with the Father: "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied" (i. 2).

He is salvation to His people (i. 9-11). The service which we render to God is acceptable through Jesus Christ (ii. 5). When we are called to suffer it is enough to know that we suffer for His sake (iv. 14). Living and dying we have peace in Him (v. 14).

These references are from the First Epistle. In the Second Epistle ¹ we have other ascriptions of honour to Him. He, as our Lord and Saviour, is the Ruler of the Kingdom of God (i. 11); the teachings of the prophets of the New Testament are "the commandment of the Lord and Saviour" (iii. 2); the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord is one; it is the goal to which the Christian life bends its efforts (i. 2), and according as we advance in that knowledge we grow in grace. (iii. 18).

He who has suffered in the flesh will return to this earth, but apart from sin. His coming has been long delayed. Unbelievers treat the promise of His return with ridicule, but the Lord's delays are calculated; the secret of His advent is hidden in the divine wisdom (2 Pet. iii. 4-8). His return is described by three memorable words—a presence (2 Pet. i. 16), an unveiling (1 Pet. i. 13, iv. 13), a manifestation (1 Pet. v. 4.) It is to be a forthshining of divine splendour, of which the transfiguration glory was type and symbol (2 Pet. i. 16, 17). That return of the Saviour will be an hour of gladness to His people (1 Pet. i. 8, iv. 13), and will be signalized by a gift of measureless grace (1 Pet. i. 13).

The pages of these Epistles are crowded with reminiscences of the life and ministry of Jesus. It will be enough to mention one or two.

The references to the lamb without blemish and without spot recall that day on Jordan's bank when the Baptist, looking upon Jesus as He walked, exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God" (Jn. i. 36). It was on that night, apparently, that Andrew brought his brother to Jesus, and Simon received a new name and a new vocation.

That name was impressed on Simon at Caesarea Philippi, when in response to the confession which he offered in the

¹ Dr. Bigg gives at length his reasons for believing that this Second Epistle is really the work of St. Peter, *I.C.C.*, pp. 242 ff.

name of the apostolic company, Jesus said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). No doubt the remembrance of this was in the mind of Simon Peter when he spoke of the chief cornerstone which the rulers had rejected, and added, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood."

In the second Epistle we have a moving description of the scene which he and his brother-apostles witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration when they beheld His majesty, when there came "such a voice" from the excellent glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". This, says Simon, has made the word of prophecy to us "more sure" (2 Pet. i. 16-19).

In the First Epistle there is a reminiscence of the last evening when Jesus, rising from the supper table, laid aside His garments, took a towel, and girded Himself, that He might wash His disciples' feet. When He had washed their feet, resumed His garments, and again taken His seat at the table, He said to the wondering Twelve: "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you". And now Simon Peter, having taken the exhortation to heart for himself, passes it on to the believers under his care: "Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility" (1 Pet. v. 5).

Once more Simon recalls the past. The risen Lord has presented Himself to seven members of the apostolic company on the lake shore. After the early meal is over, He notices Simon struggling into his fisher's coat, which he had laid on the sands to dry, and says to him: "When thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not". Simon, now aged, and aware that the putting off of his tabernacle was swiftly drawing near,

adds: "Even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me" (2 Pet. i. 14).

The Epistle of Jude seems to belong to "the Petrine cycle". Apparently Jude was our Lord's youngest brother (Matt. xiii. 55). To Jude Jesus Christ is "our only Master and Lord" (verse 4) the saints are "kept for" Him (v. 1), their constant attitude is a reaching out towards His mercy unto eternal life (v. 21). It is through Him that our salvation is effected and secured, so that by His grace we shall be guarded from stumbling in this life, and at last presented before the Presence of the Divine Glory, faultless, and in exceeding joy (vv. 24, 25).

(c) THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

"If I were to express my own opinion I should say that the thoughts are the thoughts of the apostle, but the language and composition that of one who recalled from memory and, as it were, made notes of what was said by his master."

—ORIGEN.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has neither signed nor addressed his letter: the earliest title was simply, "To the Hebrews." He does not tell us to which company of believers these exhortations were addressed. Sir W. M. Ramsay is one of those who think that this letter may have been sent from Caesarea in the name of St. Paul to the Church in Jerusalem (A.D. 59-61). As St. Paul was at this time in close confinement (not as in a later imprisonment "in his own hired house") he might not have opportunity to compose a carefully considered treatise such as this. But we know that his friends had access to him (St. Luke and Philip the Evangelist among the rest) during the two years' confinement in Caesarea (Acts xxiv, 23); he might, therefore, invite their assistance in framing a farewell message to the Church in Jerusalem. The concluding

verses of the Epistle remind one of St. Paul's manner of speech, but the bulk of the letter may have received its form from another hand—Luke's, perhaps; the language constantly reminds one of him. And if this were so, we can understand that St. Paul would not claim the treatise, as altogether his own. It has often been said that the strain of doctrine is Pauline: at any rate it is so in the sense of 1 Cor. xv. 11—"Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed"—there is no disharmony between St. Paul and the author of this Epistle in their teaching respecting the Person of Christ.

A massive sentence at the beginning of the Epistle strikes the theme—Christ in the glory of His High Priestly service.

He is the fullness of the divine revelation, the completion of the sayings of God: "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." That which the Old Testament struggled to display in the tremulous and broken lights of prophecy has now been revealed in clearness in the breaking of that day that shall have no morrow. Christ is the luminary whose radiance fills the heaven; Christ is the sum of the divine message to mankind (i. 1, 2).

This Son is in His true being the effulgence of the Father's glory and the very image of His substance. In official rank He is Heir of all things. As the First-born of creation He fashioned the ages, and continues to uphold all things by the word of His power. As Mediator and Priest He has made purification of sins, and taken His place on the right hand of the Majesty on high (i. 2, 3). It is this last achievement that the writer proposes to insist upon, and therefore he places it in emphasis above all the rest. For all the Scriptures climb to the doctrine of the Redeemer's Person by way of the Cross.

The author of this Epistle now turns to the truth of our Lord's manhood. "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood He also Himself in like manner partook of the same" (ii. 14). He who was greater than the angels was made for a little lower than they (ii. 7). It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren (ii. 17). He was tempted in all points like as we are (iv. 15); He suffered being tempted (ii. 18); and as the Captain of salvation He was perfected by means of the sorrows which He bore (ii. 10): "Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 7-10).

Melchizedek was a priest-king; his royalty was based on his priestly office; thus he is the representative of a natural, not an elective, priesthood. By right of nature the father of the family is priest for his household. When the family grows into a clan, then into a nation, the chief or monarch retains the priesthood. Our Lord is a royal priest, His dominion is established upon His priestly work.

He was called of God, appointed to offer gifts and sacrifice—the gifts of a holy obedience, the sacrifice of Himself (v. 1, 4). His offering was for sins, not to be repeated, but accepted once for all (vii. 27, x. 12). When His self-sacrifice was completed, He passed through the heavens (iv. 14), appeared before the face of God on our behalf (ix. 24), and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (viii. 1, x. 12). Now He ever liveth to make intercession for His people (vii. 25). He hath an

indissoluble priesthood (v. 6, vii, 24). By His offerin those who believe are sanctified (x. 10, xiii. 12), through Him they offer praise (xiii. 15), He is the inspiration of their heavenward way (xii. 2), by Him they receive entrance into the Holiest (vi. 20 x. 19). He shall appear in the end of the age apart from sin unto salvation: it may not be long till our eyes shall see Him—"how soon, how soon," (ix. 28, x. 37). Then, and now, and to all futurity, He is the same Jesus who suffered and sorrowed on our behalf—"the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (xiii. 8).

The central word of this Epistle is "covenant". The covenant of God is a transaction in which He does all and gives all; the believer only receives. This covenant is sealed in Christ: He is the Surety (vii. 22) and the Mediator (viii. 6) of this "better covenant". The teaching regarding this new covenant in Christ is summed up in the final benediction and supplication: "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep in the power of the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages, AMEN".

(d) ST. PAUL

"The whole of Paul's thought hinged on his doctrine of Christ's divinity."

—DR. ALLAN MENZIES.

St. Paul's doctrine of Christ was rooted in the overmastering experience which befell him on his way to Damascus. In the splendour of that vision he beheld Christ, who in the days of His flesh was a Sufferer and a

Sacrifice, exalted far above all might and dominion, the dispenser of penitence and pardon to all who should call upon His name. In his Epistles the apostle stedfastly gazes upon the risen Lord, and it is thus that in all his messages to the Churches he speaks of Him. It is not that St. Paul was unconcerned as to the earthly life of Jesus; if all the references to our Lord's temporal ministry to be found in the Pauline Epistles were placed in order, we should have a framework into which the entire Gospel story might be set. But in the economy of the Spirit each New Testament writer witnesses to those things of which he has been personally conversant. For St. Paul, Christ is first and last a Saviour who died for our sins; yea, rather, who has been raised for our justification.

As we have suggested, the Pauline Christology is immediately derived from the *fact* of Christ. As the experience of the apostle was enlarged, his conceptions reached out into a land of far distances. As he meditated on that Holy One and ever entered into a closer fellowship with Him, new glories adorning that One who is altogether lovely came into view.

The question, whence did St. Paul derive his doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, has been asked insistently of late. He found it, as we have already said, in his recognition of Christ. But having made that admission, we may remind ourselves of Daniel's description of the Son of man who drew near to the Ancient of Days. The implications of this description were so evident that the Jewish apocalyptists in the second and first centuries before Christ emphasised the truth that the Promised One, for whom the generations of mankind had long been stretching out hands of desire, already dwelt with God.¹ In First Enoch, for example, we read:

¹ But we must first recall the announcements of the Coming One, in Old Testament prophecy: *e.g.* Mic. v. 2.

fore, says the believer, with St. Paul, "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20).¹

There are serious difficulties attendant on this doctrine. Dr. Godet relates that he wrote and re-wrote his commentary on Romans v. 12-21 ten times, and that the result did not please him. But the broad conception of the apostle is sufficiently plain. The Son of man came from the eternities; He struck into the race by a path which was all His own, under the divine election. He became Representative Man, embracing in Himself the fullness of our manhood, and becoming our God, our Redeemer, our Advocate and Mediator.

This conception of the Representative Manhood, the Covenant Headship of the Saviour, brings us to a theme which St. Paul has made peculiarly his own—the vital union of Christ with His people. It has been computed that the words "In Christ," "In the Lord," occur some hundreds of times in St. Paul's Epistles. One has called this phrase, "In Christ," the monogram of St. Paul.

Again, it has been asked, From what source did St. Paul draw his conception of what is sometimes called the "mystical" union of the believer with Christ. And I suppose we must answer again, From Christ manifest in himself. But it is not impossible that some of the "interior" teaching of Jesus which has been preserved to us in the Fourth Gospel had entered into the possession of the Church before Paul wrote, and that he shares with the whole family of faith the glories of their inheritance—the unsearchable riches of Christ. "I am the true Vine," said the Lord in His sacramental address; "abide in Me, and I in you." The persons are not confounded, but the life is one.

The Eternal Word is Life of our life and Spirit of our spirit: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The Son of man is our "next of kin," nearer than

father or mother, husband or wife, son or daughter. And by the divine appointment He stands for the race, our Representative, our Advocate, our Substitute.

Our union with Christ is effected by the Holy Spirit: the Spirit comes as God into our human souls; but as the Spirit of Jesus He confers upon us the victorious patience of the Redeemer, by which He overcame the world and now breaks the power of cancelled sin. "For it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell; and we are fulfilled in Him."

As Galileo's telescope opened doors in heaven that had been closed till then, so the endowment of the Spirit made known to St. Paul new glories in Christ. The Church in Colossae was afflicted with a phase of that heresy which was afterwards termed Gnosticism. God dwelt, it was taught, in a remote solitude, and between His presence and the life of men in this world multitudinous forms—thrones, dominions, principalities and powers—intervened. With one brief sentence, St. Paul sweeps all these aeons out of the sky: "Christ," he says, "is all and in all." This evil doctrine which had infected the Colossian Church leads the apostle to speak of our Lord's relation to creature-existence. He is "the First-born of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth . . . all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 15-17). Again, the question has been asked, Whence did St. Paul derive this conception of Christ's relation to the cosmos? And again we may answer, From His personal knowledge of Him in whom it pleased the Father that all the fullness should dwell. Words which our Lord had spoken would be much in his mind, as they were familiarly known to the Church: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father" (Matt. xi. 27): "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven

and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). But the mould of his doctrine seems to have been taken from the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, especially from that glorious hymn in praise of the divine wisdom, which we find in the eighth chapter of Proverbs: "When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He set a compass upon the face of the deep; . . . then I was by Him, as a master workman; and I was daily His delight."

The Word went forth from God, to enter into creation not yet called into being. He was the divine agent in creation; in His eternal life all things consist, and He is the goal towards which time in its courses and life in its destinies tend. In Him, through Him, unto Him, are all things. And it was "the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Eph. i. 9, 10).

From this it is only one step upward to view our Lord's essential dwelling with God. This is a theme which is constantly before the apostle's mind. But now one can only point to a few familiar texts.

"In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). The only begotten Son has entered into flesh, but has not laid aside any of His divine powers; the entire being of God dwells in Him. He is co-essential with the Father.

"Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15). This is a figure analogous to those which we meet with in Hebrews i. 3—the stamp left by the impression of the die, the radiance of the luminary—it has sometimes been described as a mirroring of God. Rather it is the manifestation of Him whom no creature has seen or can see—the only and sufficient manifestation of the Viewless One. Had St. Paul heard from any of the apostolic company

the word spoken by our Lord at the Supper Table to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father?" (John xiv. 9).

"Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). The revisers point out that the word "being" in this verse is literally "being originally," it connotes "essential existence." His true home was the divine existence; Godhead was His native "form." This text brings us to another line of teaching in St. Paul's doctrine of Christ. He whose essential being was in God emptied Himself, or if we find that word too strong, let us return to the familiar phrase of the Authorised Version—"He made Himself of no reputation." This is only one of several texts in which St. Paul teaches this doctrine, but it is the most significant. The Divine Son laid aside everything belonging to the "form" of God that would have hindered His living in true manhood as His brethren of mankind do. Of course it cannot mean that He laid aside His Deity, that is, His true self, but only those potencies and prerogatives which do not consist with the human mode of existence. He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. (2 Cor. viii. 9).

But we shall have occasion to speak of this again, and may pass from it now, remarking this only, that it is interesting as showing the fullness of the Spirit's teaching to each apostle, that those who speak most loftily of the Son of God—as in the Pauline Epistles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Johannine writings—are most persuasively clear in noting the condescension of His love in sharing our temptations, in bearing our sorrows, and in being touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

In the days of His flesh our Lord was careful to direct the thought of those who believed on Him past Himself to the Father. The story of the Prodigal Son, where our

Lord seems to rule Himself out of the parable in order that the Father's grace might be the more clearly seen; that great word, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"; the frequent references to His mission or commission; His assertions, "I am the way; . . . no one cometh unto the Father but by Me", "All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me . . . for I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me", "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you," these and many other passages illustrate our Lord's earnest desire that our minds and hearts should be much occupied with the thought of the Father's love.

This concern is very evidently present in the Epistles of St. Paul.¹ One text in particular has drawn the wondering attention of commentators: "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. . . . And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also become subject to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

This is one of the very few sayings of Scripture which carry us past the dispensations that mark the course of the ages, into the timeless eternity. The saving work of the Redeemer has at length been completed. A voice from the Throne repeats the triumphant word of the Cross, "It is done" (Rev. xvi. 17). The Manhood continues for ever, but the mediatorial kingdom passes into the reign of God. God is all in all, but still His glory is manifested only in and through the Son.

¹ Dr. Mackintosh says that this feature of the Pauline writings is at first "disconcerting." One does not feel it to be so; for Christ is the glory of God. And no apostle can make His filial subordination to the Father more plain than He Himself has done.

St. Paul confirms to us the lesson which our Lord Himself has taught us, that we come to know Him as Redeemer, and that it is in our experience of His saving grace that we press onward into the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. All the great Christological passages either begin with the thought of redemption or find their centre at the cross: "In whom we have our redemption through His blood" (Eph. i. 7); "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5); "In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. i. 14); and so on in every similar passage. Indeed St. Paul is satisfied that he can comprise all that the Holy Spirit has taught him about his Lord into this one word: Christ died, He was buried, He rose, He was seen; (1 Cor. xv. 3-8) and in his preaching this is the sum of the great evangel which was his glory: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2).

(e) ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

"As for St. John . . . the eye of his soul is fixed on God and on the Word Incarnate. . . . He looks up to heaven, and as he gazes he tells us what he sees."

CANON LIDDON.

(1). The First Epistle of John is in reality, though not in form, a summary of Christian doctrine. The writer was familiar, apparently, with the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Epistles, and as he introduces his great theme of Life in the Living One (i. 1-4) he seems to make direct reference to the Fourth Gospel. To the beloved disciple Jesus is the unveiling of the eternal life; the aged apostle recalls how he had looked upon Jesus as He walked, gazed upon His glory, and touched His wounds; and still that voice which he had listened to in Galilee falls on his ears

as the sound of many waters. Jesus is the Word of life. As the Word He is the Self-revelation and the Self-communication of God; as the Life He is living and life-giving.

The Father and the Son are one in fellowship (i. 3); The Son is in a singular sense the begotten of God (v. 18). The Father sent the Son that we might live through Him, that He might be the propitiation for our sins, that He might be the Saviour of the world (iv. 9, 10, 14). The Son came by water and blood—in His doing and His dying; with the water and with the blood—for our cleansing and for the remission of our sins (v. 6). And having come, He abides with us (v. 20); we are in Him. He has given us an understanding that we may know Him; we live in Him (v. 11). His blood cleanses us from all sin (i. 7), and He is eternally our Advocate with the Father and the propitiation for our sins (ii. 1, 2). The sum of our duty Godward is to believe in the Son. The sum of our obligations to our fellowmen is to love as He loved (iii. 23, v. 5, 10, 13); our prime duty towards Himself is to confess Him (ii. 22, iv. 3, 15, 2 John 7). And the Epistle ends where it begins, by placing the Saviour in the most intimate union with the Father: "This is the true God and eternal life" (v. 20).

(2.) The Apocalypse is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him . . . and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John, who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ" (i. 1, 2).

In the day of his youth when John the son of Zebedee was stirred to holy fervour by the breath of the revival movement which swept over the land of Israel, he heard the Baptist exclaim in love and adoration, "Behold, the Lamb of God; He taketh away the sin of the world." It was the beginning of a new life to the young fisherman of Galilee, he knew himself to be redeemed unto God;

from that hour Jesus was everything to him. In this treatise he gathers under that name—the Lamb of God—all his subsequent knowledge of his Great Master. Twenty-eight times in this book we read of “the Lamb.” We see Him first ascending from the earth where He had suffered and conquered; He takes in His hand the sealed roll of the divine providences, the title-deeds of the inheritance forfeited by sin; He claims the world of men as His purchased possession; and all the holy intelligences whose goings are in the light of God unite in worship of that Blessed One who is in the midst of the throne (Rev. v. 11-14). Afterwards we see Him as the Minister of divine judgment (vi. 17), as the Author of an eternal salvation (vii. 10), as the Sacrifice whose blood cleanses the life (vii. 14), as the Shepherd who leads His ransomed flock to the springs of the river of life (vii. 17), as the Victim who by the shedding of His blood gives power to the saints in the war against the dragon of hell (xii. 11), as the Captain of the hosts of the Lord, marshalling His army for the great day of His power (xiv. 1), as the Conqueror who has cast down and trodden under foot all principalities and powers of darkness (xvii. 14), as the Bridegroom of His Church (xix. 7, 9), as the Light of the New Jerusalem (xxi. 23), and as the Sharer with God in the occupancy of the Eternal throne and of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit (xxii. 3).

In the nineteenth chapter a fourfold name is given to the Saviour. He is in all the exercise of His vocation, “Faithful and True”—faithful to His promises, true to His own being (verse 11). Again, “His name is called the Word of God”—the revelation of the Father, of His love and truth and grace (verse 14). “And He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords”—He is the Lord of the ages and the Ruler of all mankind (verse 16). But there is

another ascription more mysterious and mighty, for it tells of His eternal life with the Father—"He hath a name written, which no one knoweth but He Himself" (verse 12).

The loftiest titles are offered in this book to the lowly Nazarene—on His head are many diadems. One may gather up the teaching of the Apocalypse regarding Christ in those sonorous words which make music "like the sound of seas":

"And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain, to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, unto the ages of the ages. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped" (v. 11-14).

(3). In his Gospel John conceals himself behind his Lord. But the fact that it was given to him to cherish and record those profound utterances of Jesus which are the distinguishing feature of the Fourth Gospel is evidence that the words which fell from the Master's lips had become part of the testimony of the beloved disciple. John is a witness that Jesus said these things, and in recording them he sets to his seal that they are true.

In the course of the history we see no man save Jesus only; nothing of John's is preserved except an interjected comment on some rare occasions—such as these: "Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men, and because He needed not that anyone should bear

witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man" (ii. 24, 25). "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (vii. 39). "This He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die" (xii. 33). "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper" (xiii. 3, 4). "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name" (xx. 30, 31).

The only passage of any size in this Gospel which comes to us directly from the mind and heart of the Apostle is the prologue (i. 1-18). It begins with a term which was part of the street language of Ephesus in St. John's day. *Logos*, the Word.¹ In the Persian books of devotion *Honover*, the Word, represents the creative activity of God:² in Greece from the time of Heraclitus (B.C. 535-473) "logos" was a common term in philosophy. It was used to signify either the inner word—the reason, or the forth-going word—the utterance. From Greece the term passed into later Jewish writings, and became prominent in the commentaries of Philo. Much labour has been expended in the endeavour to ascertain the precise source from which St. John drew this significant term. Probably in Ephesus all the streams had met and mingled—Mazdaism, Stoicism, Rabbinitism, Philonism, etc. As we say,

¹ Dr. Rendel Harris derives this term (*logos*) from the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament by way of Rabbinitism. This is probably the most direct line of descent.

² James Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*, lxix, lxxviii, i, 198, 207f., etc. The "Word" is the all powerful weapon of Ahura Mazda; it was revealed in "the boundless time," before the creation of the world. Translated into speech it runs thus: "The will of the Lord is the law of holiness."

the word "logos" had become a familiar expression in the streets and market place of Ephesus. And St. John uses it as a designation of the Saviour of the world, One who in all past generations had kindled the light of truth in the hearts of men of every age and race—for the Almighty at no time left Himself without witness. This was a thought, we may be sure, which was dear to St. John, and the fact that this word is confined to the prologue and does not occur in any of the sayings of our Lord is an important testimony to the historical accuracy of the narration and to the scrupulous veracity of the Evangelist.

"In the beginning." With the first chapter of Genesis in his mind St. John takes us back to the dawn of creation. Before created existence began to be the Word *was* with God—"Throned face to face in equal Deity"—a fellowship within the Godhead, presently to be described in the simple but profound metaphor, as reclining on the bosom of the Father, in the embrace of immeasurable love (verse 18). This Word who was with (*πρός*) God, was God. He was not the Trinal-Essence, but there is no God apart from Him. He was the efficient Agent in creation—All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made. "I shall see Jesus," said Sir David Brewster when dying, "Jesus, who made the worlds."

"That which hath been made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men." Not only material existence, but also sentient being, and human intelligence, were the creation of the Word. And in the mind of man there was a witness to the living God: "The true light which lighteth every man, was coming into the world" (verse 9). The light of the unrisen sun had begun to scatter radiance upon the earth.

But an alien element had entered the world of men. The darkness of ignorance will flee at the touch of light, but moral darkness will resist the purest and strongest

illumination. As when in the morning the sun rises, the curtains of night are folded and the earth mirrors back the day: but the fog which holds within itself the smoke and defilement of a great city will blot the sun out of the heavens: "The light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not" (verse 5).¹

When faith had forsaken the earth and the divine witness in the hearts of men had grown dim, the Word spoke in a divine revelation to Israel, through prophets and psalmists and men of wisdom, until the ancient revelation came to a close with John the son of Zacharias: "There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light" (vv. 6-8). The testimony of the Baptist summed up the prophetic series, for, as Simon Peter said to the company of Cornelius, "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43).

When the prophetic cycle had terminated in John the Baptist, the Word was still uttering the divine message to men. The Evangelist speaks of Him in three spheres: First in the world: "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not." The great nations, Rome, Parthia, Egypt, had no ear to hear, no heart to understand the voice of Jesus. Second: "He came unto His own home, and the people of His own home would not receive Him." The Jews said, We will not have this man to reign over us. Third, there was to Him a gathering of individual men and women who

¹ Another and very different rendering has been suggested: "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." See R.V. marg.

welcomed Him and clasped Him to their heart: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

And then there comes this commanding word, dark with excess of brightness: "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

The aim of this Gospel is to show the progress of faith in the Redeemer. It begins with the truth as it is in Deity; it ends with that truth as it was received by the Church. Its first utterance is "The Word was with God, and the Word was God"; its last the adoring ejaculation of Thomas misnamed the doubter, "My Lord, and my God." "Between these two peaks", says the late Primate of Ireland, "the thunder rolls."

CHAPTER X

THE RESURRECTION

"The Church of Christ is built on an empty grave."

—KEIM.

"**N**OW in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."

A great stone was rolled to the door of the tomb, the temple seal was affixed, and a military guard watched against violation that night and the following day. On the third day, when the first rays of light began to stream into the sepulchre, Christ arose and went forth into the world of men.

The broken body had been wrapped in linen swathes sprinkled with the powdered spice. Angels of God hovered round the empty tomb; these were the sole witnesses of the resurrection. In the morning ere the city gates were opened a group of the ministering women, of whom many were then in Jerusalem, (Matt. xxvii. 55), met at the Damascus gate on their way to Calvary. Their progress is marked in the fourfold Gospel. John says, "they came early, while it was yet dark"; Matthew, "as it began to dawn"; Luke, "at early dawn"; Mark "they came to the tomb when the sun had risen". In the swift breaking of the day in that Eastern land a very few minutes might suffice to cover all these indications of time. While it was yet dark they awaited the opening of the gate; at early dawn it opened and they went forth; by the time they reached the garden tomb the sun had risen.

The most conspicuous members of this cluster of mourning women were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna: these, with the others, came to complete the embalming of the body arrested by the hasty interment on the eve of the Sabbath. The Magdalene in her eagerness hurried before the rest, and seeing the tomb open, stooped and looked in. She saw a shimmer of white, the grave clothes still knotted and twisted, but the body was gone. She ran back to the city, and came to the lodging first of Simon Peter, then of John the son of Zebedee. She startled them with the story of the rifled tomb; they came quickly into the street, and broke into a run. When they arrived they encountered "the witness of the grave clothes,"¹ and believed. They returned to the city convinced that they must wait till the Lord should be pleased to manifest Himself. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping". And through her tears she saw the Lord. She would have held Him, believing that time had now resumed its wonted course, and that former experiences of fellowship with the Master in Galilee and Judea would repeat themselves. But He forbade her. Do not detain Me, He said; I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God. The past is past for ever: all things have become new.

The other women were not with Mary during this memorable interview, but they seem to have lingered for some time in or near the garden. They may have ascended to the place of the cross. After a time they returned to the tomb, and having heard perhaps of the visit of Peter and John they also ventured to invade its sanctity. An angel addressed them: "Be not amazed; ye seek Jesus the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold, the place where they laid Him." They hastened to return to the city, to communicate the glad

¹ Latham, *The Risen Master*, ch. ii.

news; but as they were on their way the Saviour Himself met them with the greeting, "All hail!" They clasped His feet in worship; then hastened to bring the disciples word; these however, were "slow of heart to believe." But faith had taken root in the heart of Simon Peter, and presently a visitation of Christ was granted to him. One may be permitted to imagine that Simon had gone out, perhaps to Gethsemane, where he had sinfully slumbered through our Lord's agonising vigil. We may think of him as prostrate on the trampled grass, pouring out his soul in grief and longing, when, suddenly, he felt "the touch of a vanished hand," and heard once again the sound of a voice which had been hushed in death. The interview was too sacred for narration: Simon seems never to have told what the Master said, or what the servant answered; if indeed the experience were not too intimate for words.

Early in the afternoon two disciples, Judeans, left the city for their home in a village two hours distant. Their decision to leave Jerusalem shows that with them sorrow had mastered faith. "We trusted," they said; but their hope had perished and was laid in Joseph's tomb. At a point in the way a stranger accosted them, and inquired into the occasion of their grief. When they had freely laid bare their distress, their new-found Friend opened to them the Scriptures. "Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him," writes Luke, but the continuation of Mark states that He appeared to them "in another form". Their eyes were dim for lack of faith, so that they failed to recognize the familiar features. When the travellers came to Emmaus the Companion Christ turned aside, as if to tarry with them for the night. In the wonted action of thanksgiving before meat He was known of them; but as they gazed in love and wonder upon their crucified and risen Lord, He vanished out of their sight.

The travellers strapped on their sandals, took up their staves, and hastened to Jerusalem, to bring the disciples word. They found a gathering of the faithful assembled in an upper room, the doors being fastened for fear of the Jews. Before Cleopas and his companion could relate their story the gathered company uttered the joyful salutation, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Then, as soon as opportunity was given, *they* told what things were done in the way, and how He had been revealed to them in the breaking of bread. As they continued to speak, they looked up, and saw Him—"Jesus Himself"—standing in the midst of them. Had He been an unseen and silent companion of the two Judean disciples on their return journey? and did His undiscovered presence cause their hearts to burn again? Did He enter with them unseen into the midst of the upper room company?

On the next Lord's Day in Jerusalem the Eleven again were met. Thomas, who had been on the brink of secession, who had gloomily said to himself, "The Master will not be there; why should I go out to meet the brethren?" was now one of the number. The reports of the witnesses had quickened faith even in his dubious mind. Yet we ought not to speak of Thomas as an habitual doubter. His question on the betrayal night, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" shows that he believed in the existence of the Saviour after death. Such faith and love as were exemplified in Him could not terminate in the grave. Somewhere within the universe of God the Master would continue in the power of an endless life. But Thomas could not believe that that scarred and torn frame would ever be reanimated. It seemed to him that his Lord's "body of humiliation" had fitly been laid aside for ever. But even in his doubt Thomas had a higher faith than that of the Magdalene

when Christ revealed Himself to her. He would not be satisfied with a perpetuation of the earthly ministry and endurance of the Lord. From the words of Jesus addressed to him, "Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side," one might almost believe that Thomas had been "a witness of the sufferings of Jesus," and was therefore ready to give God thanks that the weary course of the Man of Sorrows was ended, and that He had now passed in spiritual splendour into the presence of God.

As the disciples sat with their Lord at the Supper Table, on that night in which He was betrayed, He said to them: "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." On the resurrection morning the angel said to the women: "Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him." Immediately after, when the Lord Himself encountered this faithful company, He said to them: "Fear not: go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." A few verses later Matthew tells us that Jesus had appointed as a rendezvous a "mountain," probably the scarp that rises above the Lake, that place of privacy to which He had so often withdrawn Himself for prayer.¹ It does not appear that He had fixed the time, that may have been disclosed afterwards. But while He tarried and they waited, seven of them spent a night of fruitless toil upon the Lake, fishing. In the morning Jesus stood upon the shore, but they knew not that it was Jesus. The mist that lay upon the water may have dimmed their sight; or their faith had not been awakened. But one loving heart knew Him by His word; the disciple of love whispered to Simon, "It is the Lord." This is the only utterance of John of which we have certain knowledge between the observance of the Memorial Feast and the close of the century, when he took up an un-

¹ Matt. xxvi. 32, xxviii. 7, 10, 16.

accustomed pen, to relate the story of Jesus. But this one word may sufficiently bridge those sixty years—*he spake of Him*.

By the Lakeside Peter, equipped for his lofty service by the possession of a love that many waters could not quench, was publicly restored to the apostolate and set apart as a pastor of the Church. Mr. Latham thinks that when Jesus said to Simon, "Follow Me," He may have drawn him apart to give a last instruction about the contemplated gathering on the mountain.

It was to this meeting, apparently, that more than five hundred brethren came together from every part of Galilee, and no doubt from other districts of Palestine. Not one of those who loved the Saviour would willingly be absent on that great day. When He drew near to the assembled company "some doubted," but soon their hesitation was swept away, and all of them were prompt to bear witness to the reality and power of the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 6). Then the Lord announced the charter of His Church, and gave to the humblest members, as well as to "the very chiefest apostles" their commission: "Jesus came to them, and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even to the consummation of the age."

One other appearance is recorded. It appears to have been signalled by a farewell meal: "Being assembled together with them (the margin reads 'eating with them') He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me" (Acts i. 4). Tradition relates that this meeting was held in the Upper Room, which became the first church of the Redeemer, still

identified in the time of Hadrian, and entitled by the Crusaders, "Sancta Sion."¹ Thence the little company would descend into the Valley of Judgment, then climb the slope of Olivet, until they came "over against Bethany." Here, it is possible, they would be reinforced by a group of disciples and friends from the village where our Lord had so often found welcome and shelter. Words of farewell were spoken; the Saviour, having lifted up His hands in blessing, was parted from them, and received up into heaven. As He ascended, the cloud-chariot of Deity wrapped Him round, and He ceased to be seen of them. When we think of the Father's house on high we do not think of a home beyond the stars: heaven is not removed from us by astronomical but by spiritual distances. Yet instinctively we look upward. It was so with the Lord (John xvii. 1); it was so then with the disciples: "they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went." But the angels reminded them that His presence and power were with them still.

And this is the consistent teaching of the New Testament. Stephen, amid the crashing stones, cried out, "I see Jesus." "Last of all," said St. Paul, "He appeared to me also." And on the Patmos shore the beloved disciple saw once more his dear Lord. One day, as Scripture assures us, He who is with us always, even to the end, will flash out into visibility, and we shall see Him as He is. Seeing Him so, we shall be like Him.

Many questions circle round this glad evangel of the resurrection. Most of these are beyond our grasp; we have no experience of the spiritual gifts which will adorn the children of the resurrection, and it would be vain for us to imagine them. But so far as our understanding can follow the scriptural account, it appears to us to be plain and unencumbered. The fivefold account—that of St.

¹ Sir G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, ii. 567 ff.

Paul and of the four Evangelists—is harmonious with itself. Each writer tells the story as he had known it, not trying to conform to the narration of any other, nor charging it with error. Amid many divergencies there is no contradiction.

Many of those who write upon New Testament subjects hold as a first principle the incredibility of miracles. Accordingly they refuse to admit the possibility of a physical resurrection. But difficulties with regard to the miraculous arise from a misconception of what miracle is, aided by our ignorance of the forces inherent in nature. Miracle is not a violation of natural law: however mysterious it may be, it is still within the scope of the divine government. Nor can we conceive of nature as being closed to what we call the supernatural; on the contrary, nature is penetrated with spiritual energies.

When this world came from the creative hand of power it was acknowledged to be "very good." Then sin entered, and the divine harmonies jangled into discord. But it is unthinkable that God should have so imprisoned Himself within a system of natural law as not to be able to re-harmonize the song of creation. Surely, the divine wisdom must have resources at its disposal that are sufficient for the repair of a broken world.

Nor need we think that the necessity of bringing in a remedy from without to a world already fashioned argues lack of forethought on the part of the Creator. Scripture assures us that the Lamb of God was slain as from the foundation of the world (Rev. xiii. 8), that before the universe came into being our Lord Jesus was foreordained to be a sacrifice (1 Pet. i. 20). Redemption is the larger thought, it precedes and encloses creation. Behind the origination of created being lies the divine election of the ransomed race in Christ Jesus (Eph. i. 4). The restoration of our ruined earth is provided for within the divine

foreknowledge; it is secured within the realm of law, even though that law in its higher reaches passes our comprehension and has place beyond the circle of our normal experience. We must, of course, remember that "law" in this sense simply stands for a mode of the divine activity.

To apply this to the resurrection of the Lord. St. Paul, speaking of the resurrection of the body, says: "Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. v. 5). The Spirit of Him who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead is even now working in our mortal body, and His remedial activity is in strict accordance with the original purpose of God in our creation. We may conclude from scriptural intimations that if man had not fallen he would have been promoted to a life in the Spirit in which he would have been endowed with a body like to that of the glorified Saviour. So that resurrection, miraculous as it undoubtedly is, is in the line of God's original design for men. Thus we enter into the deep meaning of our Lord's words: "I am the resurrection and the life."

The appearances of Christ during the forty days seem to have depended upon two facts. First, the body of the risen Lord was evidently altogether subject to His own will. To a certain extent this was the case during His life in the flesh, as when He walked over the tempest-driven waters to succour His disciples. It is the same evangelist, St. Luke, who tells us that He vanished out of the sight of the Emmaus travellers, that He invited His disciples to behold His wounds, and that He ate in their presence. To Mary He appeared as a labouring man, to Cleopas and his friend as a stranger, to St. Paul as one who was vested in splendour brighter than the sun at noon. The second fact which ruled our Lord's self-manifestation after His resurrection was, that only faith is able to visualise His presence. The one case in which this is not at first sight

evident is the revelation to James. It is St. Paul who tells us of this, and he puts the incident far on in his enumeration of the appearances of the risen Lord. We may conclude that the testimony of the disciples, firm and reiterated, had weighed down the deep-seated unbelief of the Lord's brother; and to him, now believing, the Saviour appeared.

The record makes it plain that the body that was raised was the body which was laid in the grave. The worshipping Church knew their Lord by the print of the nails. Nor did the Jews (and Saul of Tarsus was one of them) ever deny that the tomb was vacant. Such a change came over the body of Jesus as will come to those who shall be found watching when the Lord shall return. As we have seen, the body of the risen Lord was wholly under the power of His will, so that He was able to restrain the effulgence of His glory during the forty days.

Our resurrection cannot be in all respects like His. Our bodies may have mouldered into dust long before the advent cry rings out in the hearing of a startled world. St. Paul, aware of this fact, employs the figure of an ear of corn which, springing from the decaying seed, rises fresh and green above the dark earth. This is only a parable of things not seen as yet. "Now we see through a glass darkly." When John Bunyan was asked some curious question about the heavenly state, he advised his interrogator to "live a holy life; then go, and see."

The resurrection of Jesus throws light on vast fields of truth. It convinces us of His veracity; it confirms His self-witness; it certifies the pardon of our sin; it is the seal of our reconciliation with the Father; it is the presage and power of our own resurrection, a hope that maketh not ashamed. It also holds before our mind the thought that our Brother is on the throne of the universe, and that in the fullness of the times He will return to the earth which He has redeemed.

CHAPTER XI

THE RISEN LORD

“‘To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,’ began
That *Gloria*, chanted by all Paradise,
And I was drunk with joy, so sweet it ran.
It was as though a smile did meet mine eyes
From all creation, so that joy’s excess
Through sight and hearing did my mind surprise.”
—“*Il Paradiso*.”

THE beloved disciple in his exile entered into the Spirit (Rev. i. 10), and beheld his ascended Lord. One may picture the aged apostle by the shore of the sea of Adria after the day’s toil is over. And as he remembers and prays for the worshipping companies in Ephesus and throughout the province of Asia, met on this Lord’s Day to commemorate the Saviour’s dying love, he hears a voice like the sound of many waters; turning to look, he gazes upon a dearly-loved countenance, once brought into the dust of death, now more radiant than the noonday sun. It is the Lord! “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.”¹

One can hardly express the comfort of this vision. John has outlived his generation, he is almost the last

¹ “The experience of Easter Day controls the whole narrative of the life of Jesus in the Gospels.”

—G. KITTEL.

survivor of the apostolic company, age with its attendant infirmities is weighing heavily on his steps, the state of the Churches adds to his anxieties, and the power of wickedness among the rulers of this world dims the horizon and almost quenches the star of hope. But Jesus Himself draws near to the convict gang herded in the slave huts of Patmos, and laying His hand of love and power on the fainting spirit of His disciple, utters in familiar tones the well-remembered words: "Fear not." Do not be troubled or careworn: *I am alive*, and I am with you always.

In the eternal life of the Godhead, through the service of death in the flesh, and in the mediatorial reign in the Spirit, He lives, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.

Think what this means for His Church on earth! He came through deep waters, the whole fountain and flood of earth's sorrow was poured out on Him; He stooped to endure the most agonizing grief; He died—but now He has overcome the sharpness of death, and is alive for evermore. The mourner will never again have to say, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here!" for in every chamber of death, in every house of tears, He is a very present help. Where a little group of believing ones gather to pray, in the presence of prevailing apostasy, their hearts vibrate in gratitude as they repeat the words He uttered in the days of His flesh: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." When the sowers of the Word go forth to scatter the seed of the Kingdom in many lands and among all nations, the experience of the early disciples is renewed in the case of each: "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." When the wayfarer pauses "in the places of the paths," and longs for some clear word of guidance, he hears a voice behind him, saying, "This

is the way, walk ye in it"; so that afterwards he testifies, "The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me." When the tried soul, scarcely able to support the burden of his sorrow, looks up to God for aid, the heavens open, and the burden falls. "I see Jesus," is the rejoicing exclamation of one, who before was sorrowful even unto death. The weeping which has endured for a night, stretches its black wings, and is gone: joy cometh in the morning. Jesus is alive. He is now all that He was on earth, and more, for faith is able to lay a firmer hold on His almightiness and grace.

I

The Lord Jesus is alive in the perfection of His Manhood.

He grew from helpless infancy to the maturity of his powers. He entered into all the afflictions common to our nature, and thus, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews more than once affirms, He became perfect, as a priest to comfort and bless, by the things which He suffered.

It seems to have been in the divine purpose, that if our race in its beginnings had successfully endured its probation, man would have been raised to a spiritual existence, without being called to submit to death. It has been suggested that the transfiguration of Jesus was a testimony in this sense to His perfect obedience. He had successfully passed through the trial laid upon Him, and had thereafter merely to enter into the glory that awaited Him. But He had come to die, to give His life a ransom for many; therefore He retraced His steps, descended the mountain, and set His face to go up to Jerusalem.

To submit to death was involved in His taking flesh, for in His incarnation He entered into our disaster and defeat. As our Kinsman-redeemer, and because of His grace of brotherhood, He accepted all the ill lot of man.

On the third day He arose from among the dead: the very body which hung tortured on the cross, which was laid bruised and torn in the garden-tomb, passed out on the resurrection morning into the perfected life. The risen Jesus, as Man, is as all men might have been, had sin not entered our world; He is as all believers shall be, since sin has been put away. The highest reach of faith is to anticipate that hour when we shall see Him as He is, and shall be like Him.

Thomas, on the eve of Calvary, said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" He was firmly convinced that Jesus would live on the other side of death—that Spirit could not pass out into nothingness: while the stars shone and the rivers ran, Jesus would live. But the loving disciple could not bear to think of the perpetuation of that lowly life of service and pain, or of the resumption of that broken body. It was a natural, and from one point of view, a lofty feeling. But Jesus became Man once for all. The flesh which He assumed might be spiritualised, but it was not to be laid down. Manhood is on the throne; our Brother still bears the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

II

The Lord Jesus, alive from the dead, is the pledge of a completed redemption.

When He came to earth, He bound our sins upon Him. He passed through life as one who had entered into the sinfulness of His people, had embraced their guilt, and assumed their liabilities. "He carried our sins," says St. Peter, "in His own body up to the tree." He bore them to the grave, and laid them there in an eternal extinction, while He Himself was "free among the dead." From the sepulchre He arose in the power of His own blood; through that mighty energy He ascended above all the ranks of being and presented Himself with accept-

ance before the Father, who greeted Him with the ancient words: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts xiii. 33).

Our Lord's resurrection is the assurance that the debt which He voluntarily incurred has been fully paid. The Father is satisfied, eternally satisfied, with the redemptive work accomplished by the Lamb of God. And when we are willing to receive it as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, our thought and the divine thought meet: we are reconciled to God in the blood of His Son.

The resurrection holds within itself the recollection of the death—more than the recollection, it enshrines the power, of the Great Sacrifice. St. John saw his glorified Master radiant in the light of the everlasting throne—"a Lamb as it had been slain." It is as if he recalled that hour on the evening of the day of resurrection, when in the upper chamber in Jerusalem the risen Lord showed to His assembled followers His hands and His side. It was as if the adoring disciple could still see in the glory of God the print of the nails. Shall there not be something in the aspect of the ascended Saviour to keep always in remembrance, as in a heavenly Eucharist, the love that hastened to go up to Jerusalem, and turned not back from shame and spitting, something to remind us of—

"All our redemption cost,
All our redemption won;
All that it won for us the lost,
All that it cost the Son"?

III

As soon as our Lord had passed through the heavens and taken His seat at the right hand of power He sent forth the Holy Spirit to be the unction of His people. The experience of Pentecost is described as if rain had fallen on a thirsty land—"He

hath poured forth this" (Acts ii. 33). But in the announcement, made by our Saviour of the advent of the Comforter, it is said that He will come in person, the Gift of the Father, mediated through the prayer and passion of the Son, (John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7). The Spirit coming to us communicates and conveys the victory of Jesus over sin and death and hell. St. John speaks of this Gift as "His anointing" (1 John ii. 27). St. Paul speaks of "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ". (Phil. i. 19). It is by the grace of the Spirit that we spend our lives in ways that are accordant to the life of Jesus, and thus bring honour to His name. For this is the office of the Comforter, to glorify the Lord, not by adding to the truth which He taught in life and word, but by illuminating the course of His earthly manifestation: "He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John xvi. 14).

It is this Spirit of truth who inspired the Evangelists to recall the words which the Master spoke; who guided the sacred writers of the New Testament into the fullness of truth; who enabled the Christian Community to adorn the doctrine which they had embraced, to honour that worthy name by which they were called; and who animated them with evangelistic fervour, with boldness of witness-bearing even to wounds and death, and with joy that was unspeakable and full of glory. It is by this Spirit that our Lord draws near to us and whispers peace in all manner of tribulation, in our ministry of self-forgetfulness, and in the article of death. And to the Church, oftentimes careful and troubled about many things, the Christ of the Throne speaks in reassurance—"My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not".

IV

When our Saviour ascended on high He took His session on the mediatorial throne. While He was still in the hour of His humiliation He proclaimed, "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father"; and after He had risen from the grave He confirmed this word, saying, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." What He refers to in these impressive statements is not so much the work of the Eternal Word in the cosmos, when He bears up the pillars of this world, and is Himself the vital acting principle in whom all things consist, in whom the sum of being is gathered into a holy unity (Eph. i. 10: Col. i. 17); it is rather of "the reign of grace" that He speaks. Nature itself and providence serve this glorious Kingdom, but the Kingdom is more than they. Therefore we believe that all things work together for good to those who are the called of God; nor shall any created existence be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The throne of the divine majesty is encircled with the rainbow of the Covenant. Nothing, which has not within itself some gift of grace, can befall the children of faith.

The mediatorial reign of the Saviour is to be signalised by His return. He will come in glory to this world from which He was cast out with contempt. He shall gather to Himself in holiness His waiting Church, and establish upon earth righteousness and peace throughout an age-long tranquility. Then after the millennial era is closed, the Great White Throne shall be set, and all judgment shall be committed to the Redeemer, because He is Son of man. The principle of the judgment is the relation of men to Himself; those who love Him are crowned with His favour, those who deny Him are cast out from His presence.

St. Paul tells us in words that are dark with depth of meaning, that in the fullness of time, when all enemies have been vanquished, when death has been destroyed, when all things are put in subjection under His feet—"then shall the Son also become subject to Him who did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

PART III
ONE CHRIST



CHAPTER XII

PERFECT MAN

“He who is always, before the ages, perfect God, became Himself perfect man at the end of days, for us, and for our salvation.”

—PROCLUS OF CYZICUS.

THE Church Doctrine of the Person of Christ is comprised in three plain propositions: He whom we worship is *Perfect Man, True God, One Christ*. In the history of the Church these affirmations are enmeshed in a reticulation of argument, subtle and protean; yet in themselves they are as simple as it is possible for the greatest thoughts to be. It is not in themselves, it is in their relation to one another, that the insoluble difficulties of the Christ doctrine lie.

I say “insoluble,” for it is well at every stage in our progress to remind ourselves that the mystery of Godhead is past finding out. In the days of His flesh our Lord solemnly affirmed: “No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.” And when in the Apocalypse the Risen Saviour manifested Himself in glory and power to His servant John it was as one who bore, as if upon His forehead, “a name written which no one knoweth but Himself.” We may advance along the upward way as far as thought will carry us; at last we come to a point where we are constrained to say, “Here the road ends.”

In modern times there has been a reluctance, first evinced by Schleiermacher,¹ then more strongly by

¹ “Since all Christian piety rests upon the appearing of the Redeemer, the same thing is true of Him too, namely, that nothing concerning

Ritschl¹ and those of his school, to search into this mystery even as far as one may.

"Let us be content," say these, to "know the Christ by proof; let us rest in our experience of His mercy and truth without inquiring into His essential nature. Christ is God revealed in humanity; Christ is the supreme revealer of God. Let us leave it so."

But we cannot leave it thus. Neither mind nor heart will consent to an arrest of our endeavour to attain to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

A saying of Melanchthon's has been frequently quoted. In the preface to the first edition of the *Loci Communes* he wrote: "To know Christ is to know His benefits, not as they (the Schoolmen) teach, to contemplate His natures and the modes of His incarnation." From later editions this sentence was omitted. Some writers regret the omission, and suppose that the change was made in the interest of "a schematic orthodoxy" which had become dominant.² I cannot agree with this view. The sentence in question is such a word as Thomas à Kempis might utter.³ It touches the quick centre of our experience, reminding

Him can be set up as real doctrine unless it is connected with His redeeming causality and can be traced to the original impression made by His existence. Whatever falls outside these limits either must have its proper place elsewhere or can make good its position only in virtue of some more distant relationship to be demonstrated in a special way."

—*The Christian Faith*, para. 29.

¹ "Christ is unique in the human race as perfectly realising God's purpose, and as perfectly revealing God's nature. What this involves as regards the relation of Christ to God Ritschl forbids us further to inquire, as the problem is insoluble, the solutions attempted are valueless, and Christ is offered to faith and not our understanding," Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 280. Cf. Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, pp. 82 f.; Rashdall, *God and Man*, p. 101.

² Cave, *The Doctrines of the Christian Faith*, pp. 13, 206.

³ "What doth it profit thee to lecture profoundly on the Trinity; thou be void of humility and thereby be displeasing to the Trinity?"

—*The Imitation of Christ*, pp. 3, 4.

us graciously of all that Christ is to us; but as a doctrinal statement it is defective. I presume that it was because the theologian of the Reformation felt it to be so that in later editions he excised it from his volume. Christ is more than His benefits. And while much vain talk has been expended in disputing about sacred mysteries, yet a sincere love to the Saviour will not be satisfied until it reposes on an intelligent understanding of His Person. The Reformer's dying ejaculation proves the eagerness of his mind to press to the limit of human apprehension. On the day before his departure he began to enumerate the felicities into which he was about to enter. Among them he reckoned this: "Thou shalt learn . . . how the two natures are united in Christ." This had been to him a theme of profound contemplation, the solution had always evaded his comprehension, and his reason returned from the quest baffled and discouraged. But in the presence of God he would know.

If those who would lay an arrest upon our progress in the mystery of Christ mean only to convey to us the warning of Zophar, "Canst thou find out the deep things of God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" the caution is well-advised. But to refuse to carry the doctrine of the Person of Christ up to God is to deny in advance our Saviour's Deity; or, at the most, to affirm that this doctrine is "not a theoretic truth, but only a judgment of value."¹

The thought which gives birth to this reluctance to rise with Christ to the Bosom of God is not an unworthy one. It is enunciated most clearly by Luther in his repeated insistence that he will know no God, will have no God, but Jesus Christ. We have it emphasised again in the

¹ This phrase, "a judgment of value," is variously understood by different writers. It seems to mean that our knowledge of Christ is determined by our experience. But if a divine word is the originator of our experience, surely we may find God in it.

profound conviction of the Reformers, that "Jesus Christ fills all the sphere of God."¹ And it commends itself to the experience of every redeemed soul:

"Thou O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find."

This thought is expressed once for all in the great words of St. Paul: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell." But if the Spirit of God has conferred upon us the anointing which teacheth and abideth, we shall covet the fulfilment—here in measure, there in completeness—of His high priestly Prayer: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Perhaps no one ever loved Christ more passionately than St. Paul, whose insistent craving was, "That I may know Him"—Himself first; then afterwards "the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. iii. 10). The apostle's love to the Saviour was adventurous; it nerved him to scale heights of knowledge hitherto unreachd, that from those vantage grounds he might survey the glory of God as revealed in Christ.

And what shall we say of St. John, the eagle of the Church? He soars into the free air, as if in his quest for God he would win the heavens.² He draws so near to

¹ Lindsay, *The History of the Reformation*, i. 460, 472.

² "Cœlum transit, veri rotam
Solis vidit, ibi totam
Mentis figens aciem:
Speculator spiritalis
Quasi seraphim sub alis
Dei vidit faciem."

—Old Latin Hymn,

the uncreated Light that he seems to be bathed in it: "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Each of these Spirit-illuminated seers adventured as far as thought could reach or faith attain. Then they cast themselves on their faces, and worshipped.

The Church of the First Days, like the disciples on the Ascension Mount, continued to "look stedfastly into heaven." The prevailing attitude of the early Christians was one of wonder, joy and praise. They prostrated themselves in adoration as they recalled the descent of the Eternal Son to the lowliness of our nature and the pressure of our need. And just because of this—so hard is it for us to preserve mental equipoise—there was in the Church a tendency to think less seriously of the true humanity of our Lord. The complaint of a master in theology: "We allow His humanity to fade away before the majesty of His divinity", is deprived of its point in our day: we are so deeply absorbed in the remembrance of our Lord's life of manhood in the flesh that we are apt to ignore, if not to question, His very Deity. But in the sub-apostolic period it was otherwise.

In the wisdom of God the Gospels were composed as evidence to the Church of the true manhood of the Lord Jesus; for even in the first century of our era there were those who "dissolved" Jesus by denying His perfect humanity. There are not infrequent warnings against this heresy in the Pauline Epistles, and St. John opposes it with indignation: "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that

it cometh; and now it is in the world already" (1 John iv. 3, 4). "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist" (2 John 7).

When the doctrine of Christ passed out into the Gentile world, it came in contact with the ethnic philosophies which, besides providing no place for a Divine Saviour, registered an incurable antagonism between matter and spirit. The contrast thus expressed was primarily the antithesis between true being and the unreality of derived existence. This was so strongly accentuated that matter came to be looked upon as intrinsically evil. Even Philo taught that the Divinity could not touch that which was material. Moving along this line the Gnostics affirmed that our Lord's body was of a sidereal or spiritual texture. This opinion roused the strenuous opposition of Ignatius, who declared: "He suffered truly, as also He raised Himself truly, not as certain unbelievers say, that He suffered in semblance." "It was indeed as Man that He was made manifest, though He was God."¹ Polycarp also refers severely to the Docetics.² "Whoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist, and whoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil."³ The Church as a whole repudiated the doctrine. But traces of a docetic view of the manhood of Jesus lingered in the writings of some of the most eminent of the Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, for example, who taught that Jesus knew neither pain nor sorrow, nor did He experience emotion.⁴ Hilary also affirmed that our Lord was exalted above all suffering or strain of feeling.⁵

¹ *Ad Smyrn.* 2; *Ad Eph.* 18.

² The Docetics were those who held that our Lord had only a phantasmal body.

³ *Epist.* c. 7.

⁴ *Strom.* vi. 9.

⁵ *De. Trin.* x. 23.

Cyril of Alexandria too yielded to this tendency to such an extent that, in the view of Dr. Westcott, "the divine history seems to be dissolved into a docetic drama"¹. Through the writings of Dionysius called the Areopagite, a docetic tendency passed into the Church of the Middle Ages.

There were others of the patristic writers who asserted that the divine word took the place of a human soul in the Person of our Lord. The first to promulgate this view, so far as appears, was Lucian of Samosata. Lucian was born about the middle of the third century; he settled at Antioch, and became the founder of a celebrated school of exegetes. He suffered martyrdom in the days of the Emperor Maximin, A.D. 311. He taught that the Son of man had a human body, but that the Word of God took the place of a human soul. This error was adopted by Arius (d. 366), a pupil of Lucian. But Arius went further than his teacher, inasmuch as he reduced both the Manhood and the Deity of the Saviour. Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea (d. 390) embraced the opinion of Lucian, but thought to turn it to the disproof of Arianism. In conformity with the Platonic scheme Apollinarius distinguished three elements in the life of men—a material body, a sensitive soul, and mind.² He allowed the first two elements of this triad to belong to the humanity of the Lord, but he asserted that the Word Himself constituted the mind of the Man Jesus. He marshalled his argument under two heads. First, no human spirit is entirely free from the taint of sin; second, a perfect human nature joined with full Deity must issue in two persons linked to one another, not one person in eternal union. The error in these reasonings was readily detected. In the first place, sin is not native to the spirit of man, it is an intrusion. In the second place, Apollinarius confused "nature" with "person", a not infrequent error at that

¹ *Gospel of St. John*, p. xciv.

² σῶμα, ψυχὴ, νοῦς.

time. The orthodox held that Apollinarius was virtually denying the incarnation. They condemned his opinion as a heresy, affirming that, on the contrary, our Lord was "perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable (rational) soul and human flesh subsisting." They added, "That which is not taken (by the Word) is not redeemed." But they taught also that by "the grace of union" our Lord's human mind was strengthened and directed, so as to be a fit instrument for the action of the Word.

Out of the Apollinarian controversy a far more difficult question emerged. Was our Lord's Person human, or divine, or divine-human?

Our English word "person" corresponds to a number of words which had a determining value in the Christological controversies of the early centuries, though the significance of those terms varied in the course of the years.¹ Let us for the moment forget these perplexing mutations and think of personality as we commonly understand it. When we conceive of a person we think of a self-consciousness which is *intelligent, free, and moral*. If we elevate these proprieties to their highest range we reach absolute personality, which we may define as the Self-consciousness of One who is All-wise, All-powerful, All-holy. And this is God. Yet, seeing that His personality, though infinitely transcending ours, is germane to it, the question which we have intimated ceases to have urgency, and all the more when we reflect that the two natures of our Lord, though accordant, are not in the same plane of being—that the one, as infinite, is all-embracing; whereas the other, as finite, is altogether receptive. All Scripture confirms the sentence of Aratus: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). God is the sphere in which our life persists. When there-

¹ ὑπόστασις, ὑφιστάμενον, οὐσία, φύσις, πρόσωπον, σῶμα; *persona, substantia, subsistentia, essentia*.

fore we recall the fact that in creation God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Gen. ii. 7); when with Elihu we remind ourselves of our divine origin, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the Breath of the Almighty giveth me life" (Job xxxiii. 4); when we remember further that those who have been born again by the Divine Spirit are made partakers of a divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4), and that those who, like Paul, have been crucified with Christ, are able to say, "Nevertheless, I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me"—we shall not wish to press the interrogation to a clear issue.

The phrase, still often met with, that our Lord's manhood was impersonal, is not a happy one. It appears to do violence to the Gospel story, nor is it required for the preservation of sound doctrine. The *anhypostasia* of Cyril of Alexandria must give place to the *enhypostasia* of Leontius of Byzantium,¹ and that in its turn must be interpreted by the Gospel Record.

As we review in thought the earthly presence of the Lord as described by the evangelists may we not think of His human Self-consciousness as created by the Holy Spirit and ensphered in Deity? John Owen gives us in a terse phrase the general Church doctrine: "The humanity of Christ hath its subsistence in the Person of the Son, which thereby is its own."²

¹ "*Anhypostatos* is that which has no personality in itself; *enhypostatos* that which subsists in another personality, or partakes of another hypostasis."

—Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 32.

² *Works* i. 223.

CHAPTER XIII

TRUE GOD

“God’s presence, and His very self
And essence all-divine.”

—NEWMAN.

THE Early Church, as the New Testament everywhere witnesses, confessed with one voice the true Deity of the Saviour. A few insignificant sects, which hung upon the fringes of the Church, disputed this belief.

The Ebionites, clothing themselves in the garb of the “poor and needy” ones, commemorated by the Psalmists, were a company of Jewish believers, whose Christianity was, like that of the men of Acts xix. 1–7, undeveloped. At first they held that Christ was mere man, born in natural generation; later, some among them taught the Virgin Birth, but denied the pre-existence of the Christ. Yet they celebrated the day of His resurrection. They still adhered to the Levitical ceremonial. Jerome calls them indifferently “Ebionites” and “Nazarenes.”¹ Eusebius suggests that they fitly entitled themselves Ebionites, because intellectually they were poor indeed.

Cerinthus, an Egyptian Jew who came to Asia Minor towards the close of the apostolic era, had some affinities with the Ebionites. He taught that Jesus, the child of Joseph and Mary, was not at first the Christ. The Christ-æon fell on him at his baptism, and forsook him when he was hanging on the cross. Jesus, he said, has not been

¹ Harnack, *History of Dogma* i. 301. But see Zahn, *Introduction to the N.T.* ii. 518.

raised from the dead, nor will he arise until the advent of the new kingdom, when he will usher in the golden age foretold by the Hebrew prophets. Cerinthus was one of the first to carry Gnostic notions into the Christian scheme.

At a later period there were some whose fear was that the young faith of the Church might be led towards tri-theism: they apprehended that the personal distinctions in Deity might be so heavily accented as to impair the unity of the Godhead. In their recoil from an opinion so hurtful they embraced an error which came to be known as "Monarchianism"—the assertion that the Father was the only God. This opinion was strengthened by the necessity of maintaining a strong protest within the Church against polytheism in all its forms. Monarchianism passed through a number of phases until it received its complete statement at the hands of Sabellius, a presbyter of North Africa (fl. 215). He taught that there are not three eternal distinctions in the Divine Nature, but only three distinctions in the mode of the divine working. The Father was revealed in the giving of the law, the Son in the incarnation, the Spirit in the history of the Church.¹ The final stage of the divine process is the restoration of the divine tranquillity, or "pause"—God the Father being all in all.

As Sabellianism was a revolt against tri-theism, so Arianism was a reaction against Sabellianism.

In the year 318 Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, protested against a sermon of Alexander, his bishop, on the Trinity. Arius maintained that the bishop taught Sabellian doctrine; but that the truth was, that, as God alone existed, all other being, even the being of the Son, must have been created by the divine will. The matter was at

¹ He does not, however, teach that the manifestations of the "economic" Trinity were always in the above order. For example, he affirms that creation was the work of the Son, but holds that the Creator Son was retracted into Deity when this function had been performed.

length brought before a Church Synod in Alexandria, in 320, when Arius was condemned. He left Egypt, and took shelter in Asia Minor. During his stay with Eusebius of Nicomedia he wrote his chief work, "Thaleia," the Banquet, a popular defence of his doctrine. With the exception of a few fragments preserved among the tracts of Athanasius this work has perished. Neander says of Arius that he had an acute but contracted intellect, and had no intuitive faculty.

Arianism had an extraordinary popularity at the centre of empire for about half a century. When it was defeated there, it secured a new term of influence among the tribes of the North. The words of Canon Liddon are memorable: "Never was a heresy stronger, more versatile, more endowed with all the apparatus of controversy, more sure, as it might have seemed, of the future of the world. It was a long, desperate struggle, by which the original faith of Christ conquered this fierce and hardy antagonist."¹ Logically, Arianism despoiled the Saviour both of His perfect Manhood and His very Deity, and led directly to polytheism. But faith often resists logical compulsion, and Arianism did some useful work among the Gothic tribes. Nevertheless, this was a controversy which cut down to the quick. "We are fighting," said Athanasius, "for our all."

The protagonist against Arianism was "royal-hearted" Athanasius, the little deacon with the open vision and the beautiful countenance. He was "enkindled from his youth up with the passion that makes saints, the love of Jesus Christ." He possessed invincible courage, high business faculty, a singular and piercing knowledge of human nature, a humorous and kindly outlook upon the affairs of men, warm sympathy, magnanimity. Hooker says, with perhaps a touch of exaggeration, that during

¹ *The Divinity of our Lord*, p. 447.

forty-six years of his episcopate "he was never suffered to enjoy the comfort of a peaceable day." And he adds with perfect truth: "In Athanasius there was nothing observed throughout the course of that long tragedy other than such as very well became a wise man to do and a righteous man to suffer." In his youth he wrote a treatise on "The Incarnation of the Word." Accordingly, when the storm broke, he was prepared to seize the salient points and direct the controversy.¹ The Emperor wrote to Alexandria, commanding Alexander and Arius to compose their differences. When he understood that the storm had escaped control he convened an "Œcumenical Council" at Nicea, near Constantinople. It met in the year 325. Until that hour the Church had not been committed to any single form of words as a creed: the so-called "Apostles' Creed" had grown out of the baptismal formula, and had assumed many forms. An Arian creed was put forward at the Council; it was rejected. A mediating creed was next submitted; it was accepted with reservations. After certain changes had been made in it, it was approved. This was the original "Nicene Creed." The points insisted on by the party of Alexander were mainly these: the addition of the words "begotten, not made", and "from the substance of the Father"; the epithet "true," twice repeated in the sentence, "true God of true God"; and especially the insertion of the significant term, "co-essential." This is the "Homousion" which was the hinge of the controversy during the next half-century, and is still the crucial point of debate. Dr. Du Bose says truly, that "the whole dogmatic affirmation of the Nicene Council was contained in its insistence upon the one word, "homousion."

The decision of the Council was given against Arius: he and several of those who sympathized with him were

¹ See Bright, *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*, Chapter I.

banished; the dissemination of Arian opinions was made a capital offence. But the controversy was not stayed. It continued to ebb and flow until, at the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, an amended form of the Nicene Creed, known as the "Niceno-Constantinopolitan," was formally received and made authoritative.

In the Second Council of Sirmium (A.D. 357) the Arianizing bishops protested against these clauses in the Creed of Nicea—"from the substance of the Father," and "co-essential with the Father." The complaint ran thus: "As regards the disturbance caused to some or many with regard to 'substance,' which is called in Greek '*ousia*,'—that is, to make it more clearly understood, '*homooousion*,' or the term '*homoiousion*'—no mention at all of it ought to be made, and no one ought to preach it; for this cause and reason, that it is not contained in the divine Scriptures, and that it is beyond human knowledge, and that no one can declare the Nativity of the Son." This manifesto was afterwards entitled "the blasphemy of Sirmium."

The two words cited above, *homooousion* and *homoiousion* scarcely differ to sight or sound, but a chasm stretches between them as vast as the distance between finitude and infinity. The Arians were willing to accept the latter term, but on no account the former. Accordingly, the party of Alexander insisted upon the larger term—"co-essential." Long before Gibbon the gibe was current that Athanasius had imperilled the peace of the Church for the sake of a diphthong. But between the two words there is just the difference which distinguishes *Creator* from *creature*.

That the word had been used in a doubtful connection did not seem to be a fatal objection. Athanasius saw that the word itself had no heretical implications, and that no other was adequate to the occasion. He was willing, therefore, to consent to its insertion in the Creed, trusting

that time and use would free it of any misleading suggestion. The course of history has approved his action. Every Christian missionary has to act in a similar fashion—he is entitled, in truth he is compelled, to take many a term out of common use, and separate it to a holy service. The first preachers of the Gospel, the apostles themselves, were obliged to employ a language that was saturated with pagan suggestions, and which ran up into the determinations of a philosophy to which the thought of Christ was strange and incredible.

The plea that the word “co-essential” is not to be found in Scripture deserves consideration. Athanasius argued that though the vocable was not in Scripture its significance filled the New Testament. All the great theologians have regretted the necessity of employing recondite or technical language to show forth the great things of God. Calvin, for example, because of his reluctance to use such expressions, was roundly accused of heresy. Yet he yielded to necessity, and defended his action: “When it has been proved that the Church was impelled by the strongest necessity, to use the words Trinity and Person, will not he who still inveighs against novelty of terms be deservedly suspected of taking offence at the light of truth, and of having no other ground for his invective, than that the truth is made plain and transparent?”¹

This reflection of the great Reformer may apply to the further argument of the Sirmium manifesto—that the relation of the Son to the Father is above knowledge, and that no one can declare the Nativity of the Son. We are entitled to go as far as Scripture will lead, and the offending word carries us no further. The co-essential being of the Son with the Father means no more than this, that *they bear one name, share one throne, receive one worship*. The great

¹ *Institutes* I. xiii. 3. Luther confesses that he heartily dislikes the word “homoussion”: see Lindsay, *History of the Reformation* i. 471.

words of the ancient Creed come to the lips with evangelical power, and with the fervour of a love which is as deep as life and is stronger than death, "I believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, co-essential with the Father; by whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered, and the third day He rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

CHAPTER XIV

IN TWO ESTATES

“ Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the Incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.”

—C. WESLEY.

THE theologians of the post-Reformation age were accustomed to dwell with great deliberation on “the two estates” through which the Saviour passed—the state of glory which He left, the state of humiliation into which He entered. We are able to speak of the former only by way of contrast with the latter. The glories which He resigned can be understood only as we reflect upon the manner of life which He embraced.

Let us glance at some of the Scriptural statements which are given us for the guidance of our thoughts on this topic.

(1). “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. viii, 9), He renounced the wealth of His high estate, its dignities and prerogatives, and entered on an earthly existence subject to the conditions that are common to our manhood, that He might share our sorrow and make our shame His own. This poverty ran through His earthly life. To the shepherds of Bethlehem the “sign” of the Saviour’s advent was the cradle in the cattle-pen (Luke ii. 12). His undistinguished progress to manhood, the contracted sphere within which duty held Him, the familiar

commonplaces which engaged the springtime of His years—all this belonged to the poverty into which He had voluntarily come. He lived a life, if not of privation yet of exigency; He hungered and was athirst, He was weary, sorrowful, dismayed; He suffered being tempted; He was crucified in weakness (2 Cor. xiii. 4). Some of the patristic writers and many of the medieval theologians will hardly admit these things, yet they are plainly set forth in the Gospel story. Aquinas, for instance, in his eagerness to secure our Lord's true Deity will scarcely admit that He lived a life of faith and was strengthened by prayer.¹

(2). "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being [originally] in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped at, to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself."

These great words are thrown out by the way, as it were. St. Paul is desirous of inculcating humility, and he ascends to the throne of God to find a meet example. As the original of all our virtues is in God there must be in Him something that corresponds to humility in us. The Word Incarnate was "meek and lowly in heart," and there was that in the Pre-incarnate Word which might be fitly so described. His love carried Him forth in condescension to the uttermost. In His self-depotentiation He did not renounce the "form" of God. This word appears to mean the essential form of anything, that without which the thing described would cease to be what it is. He retained inalienably the divine "form" of being, but in His grace and pity He gave up all that Godhead could resign—He was moved by love to the uttermost. He was originally, and is now² sharer in the Divine Essence;

¹ *Summa Theol.* III. xxi. 1; vii. 3, 4.

² For this is what the word *ὑπόσχω* implies.

but He surrendered *the being on equal terms with God*. As creation's Firstborn He entered into creation; He took the "form" of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. That servant form He has assumed for ever: "the dust of the earth is on the throne of the Eternal."¹

Then, "being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the Name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow". In the earthly ministry there is "a process of Christ." From the cradle of Bethlehem to the cross on Golgotha there was the continual discipline of suffering (Heb. v. 8), the constant enlargement of knowledge (John v. 19, 20), may we dare to say a more enriching experience of the Father's love? (John x. 17, *cf.* Luke ii. 52).

(3). "We bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that He raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts xiii. 32, 33). In the psalm the original reference may be to the eternal "decree" by which our Lord received the divine unction for His earthly rule. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are apparently brought back to the Nativity; for, although this Epistle describes particularly our Lord's priestly ministry in heavenly places, yet it was in His first advent that He was consecrated to this glorious office—it was necessary that this Priest also should have somewhat to offer (Heb. i. 5, v. 5). But St. Paul finds the fulfilment of these words in the resurrection of Christ. Here then, we may say that we have three "moments" in the manifestation of the Son—in the Eternal Council, in the Holy Nativity, and in the Resurrection. The one life passes through immense

¹ Gifford on *The Incarnation*: *cf.* Lightfoot, Ellicott, Vaughan *in loc.*

vicissitudes—He emptied Himself, He humbled Himself, He offered Himself. His earthly progress was an itinerary towards the perfect manhood as it existed in the thought of God. Jesus has now passed through the heavens (Heb. iv. 14), and is seated at the right hand of God. He is still revealed in our nature, although material elements have passed from it, and only spiritual elements remain. Weaknesses such as our manhood knows have fallen away from Him for ever: "Christ, being risen from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him." Dwelling in the glory of the Father, He is still our example. Our most exalted hope is that at last, in some far off hour of grace and glory, we shall be like Him. We shall see Him as He is, we shall know as we are known. He is the First-born among many brethren.

(4). "The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth" (John i. 14).

We must not be led astray by our English word "became," as if the divine nature of the Word had been transmuted into manhood. A perfectly satisfactory translation is not within the scope of our vernacular; but "came to be" expresses the meaning with tolerable accuracy.¹ "Flesh" also is a term which we must not misinterpret.² St. Paul sometimes uses the word to indicate the seat and

¹ Archbishop Bernard remarks upon this text: "To explain the exact significance of ἐγένετο in this sentence is beyond the power of any interpreter" (I.C.C., *in loc.*). Similarly, Dr. Marcus Dods says: "The copula is ἐγένετο, and what precisely this word covers has been the problem of theology ever since the Gospel was written." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*). Melancthon paraphrases this clause, "God began to be man."

L.C. *De Filio*.

² On this word (σάρξ) Bishop Westcott comments as follows: "'Flesh' expresses here human nature as a whole, regarded under the aspect of its present corporeal embodiment, including of necessity the 'soul' (xii. 27), and the 'spirit' (xi. 33, xiii. 21, xix. 30) as belonging to the totality of man (*cf.* Heb. ii. 14)".

vehicle of sinful desires; but in this place it signifies merely our nature in its weakness.

In this verse we have the two "aspects", "modes," or "natures" of our Redeemer—the Word and the flesh. These co-exist, but during His earthly manifestation, the divine word has willed to live and act within the sphere of our human life. His earthly course has been described by one of the New Testament writers as "the days of His flesh" (Heb. v. 7).

This life of self-effacement is illustrated by the place which the tabernacle of witness held within the camp of Israel.

When the tribes of Israel had definitely entered upon their wilderness life, Jehovah said to Moses, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 8). Afterwards, when David desired to build a stately temple to be the dwelling-place of the Eternal, the Lord said by the lips of Nathan the seer: "I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up the children out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle" (2 Sam. vii. 6). The tabernacle was the dwelling of the Most High, but His presence was disclosed in the glory that overshadowed the tent or that glowed within the veil. Thus God walked with the children of Israel in all their desert experiences, so that Moses was able to encourage them with the thought of His sympathy: "He knoweth thy walking through the great wilderness" (Deut. ii. 7). It was as if He also had borne the burning heat, had endured thirst and hunger, and had been afflicted with weariness even to exhaustion. How this was fulfilled in Him to whom the figure pointed we know:

" In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part".

It is very probable that both the saying of the angel of the annunciation and this word of the beloved disciple look back to that happy memory of the ransomed people, enshrined in the closing verses of the book of Exodus: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle".

(5). "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5). This voice comes to us from the inner sanctuary of our Saviour's mind. The Son came forth from the Father, He came down from heaven. He passed out from the ineffable blessedness of most intimate communion with the Holy One. He exiled Himself into a far country; thence He set His face upon His homeward way, pressing forward in His pilgrimage, until at last He was able to say with overflowing gladness "Now come I to Thee." These are words on which we may reverently meditate; any attempt to interpret them might seem to savour of irreverence. Fra Angelico covered the bare white walls of the monks' cells in the convent of San Marco with dreams of heaven; but it was observed that when he painted the countenance of the Saviour he knelt as one who prayed. It is only thus that we can understand this great mystery of godliness: "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." This at least we may say: in His advent Jesus Christ surrendered all that God might surrender, He gave all that God was able to bestow, He accomplished all that God could do.

CHAPTER XV

IN TWO NATURES

“He united the true ‘form of a servant’ with that ‘form’ in which He was equal to God the Father; and combined both natures in a league so close that the lower was not consumed by receiving glory, nor the higher lessened by assuming lowliness.”

—S. LEO.

THE full Manhood and the true Deity of our Lord had now received formal expression in the creeds of the Church. The next step was to bring these two modes of His self manifestation into the unity of His Person.

It was evident from the beginning that the truth must lie between two heretical tendencies: one to dispart the Person, the other to commingle the Natures. Nestorius was accused, perhaps unjustly,¹ of the former error, but other theologians fell into that snare. Recoiling from this view, an important group of teachers, of whom Eutyches, a monk of Constantinople, was the most conspicuous, swung to the opposite extreme, and taught that the human nature of our Lord was absorbed by the Divine. An Œcumenical Council, convened at Chalcedon, in the year 451, drew lines of doctrine which ruled out both Nestorianism and Eutychianism, as these heresies were now called.

The formula of Chalcedon—“Two natures . . . in one person”—is distasteful to many in our day. It is objected to partly because the words “nature” and “person” are employed in varying acceptations by the Church Fathers, so that the most exact discrimination is

¹ See *The Bazaar of Heracleides* (Driver and Hodgson), *passim*.

required by anyone who would thread his way through the Christological controversies of the early centuries¹; partly also because it became the starting-point of a number of controversies which were for the most part highly metaphysical, and were not always informed by religious feeling.

One need scarcely take exception to the word "nature" in this connection. It is true that Schleiermacher objects to the phrase "divine nature," but this is surely an excess of refinement, drawn from a too vivid recollection of the Greek word *ousia* in its historical uses. Words are clumsy tools, but we have nothing better. No predicate applied to God is adequate: we can use only that which is within our reach. If we reject the word "nature" (*cf.* 2 Pet. i. 4) which is a good serviceable term in common use, on the plea that it comes to us out of the complex of "Greek metaphysics," where shall we find a more appropriate one? Origen, following St. Paul, chooses the word "form"; Leo does the same, but not uniformly; others discourse of two "states," or "aspects," or "modes," or "spheres." Any of these expressions will serve, if we are clear as to its exact significance. But "nature" is probably the simplest term which we can employ, and the most convenient. Dr. Major, speaking in the name of the "Modern Churchmen's Union," frankly admits: "Modernists have no quarrel with the Creed when it speaks of Jesus as being of one substance with the Father, and as possessing both a divine and a human nature." And Bishop Gore reaches the same conclusion from another direction: "Nor do I see how the terminology in question could be bettered to-day, so long as it is granted that the idea to be expressed

¹ Dr. Du Bose asserts, perhaps too strongly, that neither the Monophysites nor the Church knew exactly what they meant by the terms "nature" and "person": (*The Ecumenical Councils*, p. 281). In the Anathemas of the Nicene Creed *ὑπόστασις* and *οὐσία* are used interchangeably.

is that of the incarnation in a real and full manhood of one who belonged to the eternal being of God, as a Son with His Father." The doctrine of "the Two Natures" is simply the elucidation of the great phrase which Athanasius gave to the Church: "He became what He was not; He continued to be what He was."¹

The Greek version of the Creed of Chalcedon acknowledges Christ as Son *from* two natures, the Latin as Son *in* two natures. In so far as the early Fathers recognized a doctrinal distinction between the two forms they adhered to the latter: the former might seem to imply that the two natures were commingled, whereas the Creed was intended to teach that Manhood and Deity both persist in the one Christ. During the Monophysite controversies the divergence was thought to be of high significance.²

The most critical words in the Creed of Chalcedon are: "One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably."³ The four adverbs which close the sentence are appointed to guard the mystery of our Lord's Person.⁴ They are negative, not positive;

¹ *C. Apollin.* ii. 7.

² The history of the variant readings is doubtful. Dr. Philip Schaff has a useful note in his *Church History* (III. 745 f.). His conclusion is that "*in* two natures" was the original form of the Greek text, but that it was afterwards altered in the interest of Monophysitism. But there is something to be said for the opinion that the first form of the Greek ran "*from* two natures", and that the theological peril lurking in the phrase was recognized only in the lapse of time.

³ The first pair of these adverbs is directed against Eutychianism, the second against Nestorianism.

⁴ "The four leading terms or definitive watchwords which like a quaternion guard the sacred Person of the Lord, are simply the plain teachings of Scripture classified and condensed into single defensive terms: Christ is "truly" God, "perfectly" man, "indivisibly" one Person, "unconfusedly" two natures. Again, with more express reference to the union of the two natures in one personal agent, these last two adverbs in the Chalcedonian Council became four: the natures are said to be united (we must hear the almost untranslatable Greek of words that have done more service than any other four):

they show us only where the mystery lies, they do not help us to define it. Instead of speaking, as so many do, of "the failure" of the theologians assembled at Chalcedon, we ought to admire their restraint. They felt that at that time it was not possible to go further; they did not lay an arrest on progress, but they set down, as in a chart, those courses which could lead the Church only to danger.

The formula of Chalcedon leaves the two natures in juxtaposition: it does not bring them into union. The fathers of the Council refused to carry definition beyond the fence of the four adverbs already named. But the mind does not willingly submit to an interdict. The Chalcedonian definition did no more than enclose the mystery and bar out error; and this was its distinguishing merit. But the later developments of Church doctrine, which ran out into endless logomachies, make it evident that a positive statement, if one could attain to it, would be extremely desirable. Can we at all say *how* the union of the two natures in Christ was secured?

Let us very briefly indicate some of the ways along which theological thought has proceeded.

(1). Many of the early Fathers appear to distinguish our Lord's acting as the Word from His acting as man. Though this comes perilously near to "dividing the person", this was probably not at all in their thought. Yet their words pointed in that direction. Athanasius, for example, says: "When there was need to raise Peter's wife's mother who was sick of a fever, He stretched forth His hand humanly, but He stopped the illness divinely.

ἀσυγχύτως, without any commixture such as would produce a third nature unknown to God or man; *ἀτρέπτως*, without transmutation or the turning of one nature into the other; *ἀδιαίρετως*, undividedly, so as not to permit two distinct personal subsistences; *ἀχωρίστως*, inseparably, so that the union shall never be dissolved, being indeed incapable of dissolution."

—W. B. Pope, *The Person of Christ* pp. 27, 28.

And in the case of Lazarus He uttered a human voice, as man; but divinely, as God, did He raise Lazarus from the dead."¹

To the same effect we have this sentence of Cyril: "Some expressions there are which are in the highest degree appropriate to Deity; others, again, are appropriate to manhood; and others hold a sort of middle rank, exhibiting the Son of God as being at once God and man."² Leo in his "Tome"³ draws out a series of antitheses, but he endeavours to save the doctrine by this distinction: "Each 'form' does the acts which belong to it, in communion with the other."⁴ But along this line there is no solution of the mystery. Dr. Westcott says pointedly and truly: "It is unscriptural, though the practice is supported by strong patristic authority, to regard the Lord during His historic life as acting now by His human, and now by His Divine Nature only. The two natures were inseparably combined in the unity of His person. In all things He acts Personally; and as far as it is revealed to us, His greatest works during His earthly life are wrought by the help of the Father through the energy of a humanity enabled to do all things in fellowship with God."⁵

(2). From an early period in the history of the Church one view of the person of Christ regarded Him in simple manhood, but endowed with grace beyond all men. In love and holy obedience He so united Himself to God, that He was crowned with divine honours. He thus was the Son of God by adoption, not by birth.

¹ *Adv. Arian.* iii. 32.

² *Epist.* p. 148; *cf. Catech. Lect.* iv. 9; *Adv. Anthropol.* 382.

³ Leo, Bishop of Rome, sent to the Council of Chalcedon a treatise on the doctrine of the Person of Christ. This brochure, generally known as the "Tome" of Leo, did much to guide the deliberations of the assembled bishops.

⁴ *Epist.* xxviii. See Bright, *St. Leo on the Incarnation*, pp. 115, 231.

⁵ *The Epistle to The Hebrews*, p. 66.

Paul, Bishop of Samosata, raised this opinion into general recognition. Dr. Gore informs us that he taught broadly "that the Person Jesus did not exist till he was born of Mary; that the divine word or wisdom (conceived of as a quality or aspect of God and not as a person) dwelt in him as it dwells in other men, but in a unique degree, so as gradually to deify him, till from having been a man he became God." The theologians of the school of Antioch and the followers of Nestorius continued this line of teaching until it was formally condemned at the Synod of Regensburg in 792.

A theory which has much in common with "Adoptianism" is the view propounded by Dr. Dörner. Moving along lines laid down by theologians of the school of Antioch,¹ but with modern developments, he brought his varied learning to bear upon the doctrine of Christ. His theory is sometimes called "progressive incarnation." He shows with much wealth of argument the perfectioning of our High Priest for His redeeming work, of which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks so lovingly. But he does not seem to be able to free himself from a Nestorianizing tendency: he does not lead us up to the consummate union of the Eternal Word with Christ in the flesh.

(3). Some of the Fathers, Irenaeus, for example, and Hilary, taught that in the temptations and sufferings of the Saviour the divine Word became "quiescent." He retained the attributes of Deity, but refrained from the exercise of them. This was not renunciation of His being, but limitation of His self-manifestation. This state was maintained "by a continuous act of unwearied will." This was indeed humiliation, but it was characterised not by weakness but by power. He willed not to know, He willed not to be able. Moment by moment, the Word

¹ *E.g.* Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

withdrew from the sphere to which His life in the flesh belonged. This procedure was a revelation of love made glorious by its condescension. This view constantly reappears in the Church. Gregory of Nyssa says: "That the omnipotence of the divine nature should have had strength to descend to the lowliness of humanity furnishes a more manifest proof of power than even the greatness and supernatural character of the miracles." Luther asserts that the Logos so far rested and was inactive in Jesus as to leave the humanity opportunity for true and actual growth. The Formula of Concord states the matter thus: "That majesty, in virtue of the personal union, Christ has always had, but in the state of His humiliation He divested Himself of it, for which cause He truly grew in age, wisdom, and favour with God and men. Wherefore He did not always make use of that majesty, but as often as seemed good to Him."¹ Similarly Richard Hooker (to mention no others) writes: "As the parts, degrees, and offices of that mystical administration did require which He voluntarily undertook, the beams of Deity did in operation always accordingly either restrain or enlarge themselves."² This doctrine contains elements of truth; it "feels after" a right solution, but it does not attain to it. It posits an artificiality which is quite inharmonious with the Evangelic Records. Our Lord's actions, as narrated in the Gospels, were always marked by perfect spontaneity.

(4). A more adventurous view, which also appeals to Scripture, holds that in the act of becoming flesh the Word renounced all that could not be taken into an earthly life such as was to be lived within "the measures of our manhood." This act of self-exinanition is frequently spoken as the "kenosis" of the Word (see Phil. ii. 7). This doctrine

¹ Zanchius, Heidegger, Ursinus, and others, speak of the eclipse (occultatio) of the *Logos* in the Person of Christ.

² *Eccles. Pol.* v. 54, 6.

is not explicit in any of the patristic writings, though occasional observations here and there point in this direction. Perhaps the first to enunciate a thorough-going theory of the *kenosis* was Count Zinzendorf. He taught that the Eternal Word in assuming our nature limited Himself to a merely human course of life: "As it was His mission and will to enter into the world, He resigned with all His heart the workings and activity of His own Deity, and gave up the government of the world plenarily to the Father. Jesus Christ the God emptied Himself entirely of Deity at His incarnation, and became a mere natural man."¹ This is religious sentiment unrestrained by theological science or exact exegesis. One knows what he means, that God in Christ has given to us His all. Charles Wesley, who no doubt was familiar with Zinzendorf's views, expresses the same thought with wise and tender speech:

"He left His Father's home above
 (So free, so infinite His grace)
 Emptied Himself of all but love,
 And bled for Adam's helpless race:
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
 For, O my God, it found out me."

"He emptied Himself of all but love." Love, as His essential nature, was inalienable; but all else he laid aside.

A number of theologians have maintained in cold seriousness what was the overflowing of Zinzendorf's evangelical fervour. Gess affirms that the Word in becoming flesh "suffered the extinction of His eternal self-consciousness, to regain it after many months as a human, gradually developing, variable consciousness." Godet asserts that the Redeemer laid aside His divine state, that

¹ See Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*. B. ii. 371.

He might assume a human state: in doing so, He laid aside the form of God.¹ Grétilat maintains that "the Son of God is effectively stripped of the divine nature, so as to put on effective human nature at the moment of His incarnation."² Thomasius is the exponent of a more reasonable opinion. He considers that the Son of God emptied Himself, "not indeed of that which is essential to Deity in order to be God, but of the divine manner of existence, and of the divine glory which He had from the beginning with the Father, and which He manifested or exercised in governing the world."³

(5). In recent years a number of thoughtful writers have put forward views which may be classed as *Kenotic*, in so far as they emphasise the exinanition of the Eternal Son, but they refuse to admit in any sense the abnegation of Deity. Dr. Gore may stand as a representative of these. His latest pronouncement is as follows: "We feel that the Gospels present us with one who is, and knows Himself to be, always and in all things the Son of God, but who is throughout existing, acting, and speaking under the conditions and limitations of manhood."⁴

Let us admit that the incarnation involved a real, voluntary act of condescension which controlled the entire course of our Saviour's earthly existence, so that, in the life of Jesus of Nazareth we see God acting within the measures of our manhood. Let us concede that in Him the divine nature always acts under conditions of manhood, and that the human nature always acts in union with the divine. Can we find any way of expressing this in accordance with Scripture?

¹ In Jn. i. 14.

² E. Digges la Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*, p. 356.

³ Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, pp. 140 ff.

⁴ *Belief in Christ*, p. 227.

CHAPTER XVI

AND ONE PERSON FOR EVER

All the voluntary communications of the divine nature unto the human (in Christ) were . . . by the Holy Spirit.

—JOHN OWEN.¹

THERE is only one way, as it seems to me, by which we can even point to a true understanding of the Name nameless (Rev. xix. 12). We shall find it in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.²

Although Scripture encourages us to survey with reverence the deep things of God, one cannot hope to reach the ultimate truth. Our straitened minds cannot compass infinitude; our conception of the inter-relation of the divine and the human droops heavily earthward when it would fain soar to the skies. In meditating on this sacred theme, we must needs ask forgiveness for the unwisdom of our words and supplicate anew the grace of reverence.

Perhaps we ought to preface our consideration of this point by asking if we may think of the Divine Spirit as the Bond of Oneness in the Godhead. Scripture seems to indicate that this is so. Passages which we might quote in this connection, as, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me" (John xv. 26), probably refer in the first instance to the temporal activity of the Spirit of God; but we may surely believe that the earthly actings of the Spirit have correspondent movements in the inner life of the Godhead. Augustine using (as one must) our

¹ *Works*, iii. 175.

² Dr. Pope rightly stresses the consideration that "in almost every aberration from the truth as to Christ's Person, the Holy Ghost was forgotten." *The Person of Christ*, p. 205.

human language to express a heavenly relation, affirms that three loves constitute the Trinal Essence: "There are," he says, "the Lover and the Beloved and the Love." The Lover is the Father, the Beloved is the Son, the Love is the Spirit; and He is the Bond of Union. A more accurate definition is deduced from the creation-narrative by St. John in his prologue to the Gospel: There are the Holy Three, co-operant and co-essential, the *Life*, the *Spirit*, and the *Word*.

The Spirit is the unifying Agent in the natural creation. It was the Word who created all things that are made, but it was through the efficiency of the Spirit that creation came into being. Also, the Word is the candle of the Lord in the soul of man; but there is a spirit in man, and the Breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. Once more, the Word is the prophetic communication, which is conveyed to men by the Spirit.

We have this to add: It is the Holy Spirit who unites the redeemed soul to Christ. It was in connection with His promise of the advent of the Comforter that He commanded His disciples to "abide" in Him. When, after the resurrection, He breathed on His disciples in the Upper Room, He conveyed to them at once the indwelling Spirit and His own risen life (John xx. 22). It is the office of that Blessed One to witness to Christ, to glorify Christ, to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to His people. And so the Spirit-begotten soul can say without confusion of thought: "I live; yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20).

In consequence of this, the Spirit is the uniting force in the Church of the Redeemer. Men may differ, denominations may be multiplied, but the unity of the Spirit clasps the bond of peace. Converts of every race, worshippers habituated to every manner of life, believers nurtured in the most divergent modes of thought, are all of one mind to make Jesus King: all the saints speak in the

common tongue, there is one Lord and His name one. In His witness to the Saviour the Holy Spirit gathers us into one bundle of life, binding us to each other because we are united to the Lord. Through the good Spirit of our God we are all one in Christ Jesus, a "body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increasing with the increase of God."

May we not, following upon such considerations, believe that the Holy Spirit holds in an indissoluble unity the human and divine natures of our Lord?

The Spirit of God united the Eternal Word with the Manhood conceived of the Virgin Mary: "The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). By these words of the angel of the annunciation we are instructed that the Undivided Trinity was co-operant in the Nativity of Jesus. The *Word* proceeded forth and came from God, and by the Power of the *Most High*, which is the *Holy Spirit*, He was brought into union with our nature. This was effected, to use the phrase of Ignatius, "in the silence of God"; but from time to time, in the course of the Saviour's ministry, the inscrutable secret of the divine wisdom was opened somewhat to our understanding through the manifest operation of the Holy Ghost. This dependence upon the Spirit is confirmed in the summing up of the Lord's earthly ministrations by St. Luke: "Concerning all things that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom He had chosen" (Acts i. 2). It seems in harmony with Scripture to suggest that, from the first point of our Lord's manifestation in flesh, the Holy Spirit, mediating between the natures, empowered His action and determined His procedure.

The Son did nothing of Himself, spoke nothing of His own initiative. But the Father (through the Spirit) taught Him what He should say and what He should speak, disclosed to His knowledge the actings of the Father, and empowered Him to share in them. Those words of Jesus which pierce to the dividing of soul and spirit, those mighty works which brought heaven down to earth and cast Satan from his seat, were accomplished through the working of the Holy Ghost. And may we not believe that it was through this divine ministration that our Lord's consciousness grew to be reminiscent of His home in the Eternal Love?

It is because of this that the Spirit of God is now to us the Spirit of the Manhood, the Spirit of Jesus. The Divine Spirit and the glorified Saviour cannot be thought of as sundered or apart. The infilling of the soul with the life-breath of Jesus is the gift of the Spirit of God (John xx. 22). The Lord Christ is a quickening Spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45; 2 Cor. iii. 17). And the advent of the Risen Lord is spoken of in terms parallel to those which foretell the descent of the Spirit (John xxiv. 16-18). Yet they are not fused or commingled: the Paraclete is "another Comforter." And though the voice of Jesus and the whisper of the Spirit blend in one (Rev. xx. 20, 22), the personal being of each is distinct.

If this interpretation of our Lord's life in the flesh does not solve for us the mystery of His Person, it at least tempers the difficulties which encompass it.

(a) The difficulty of asserting "nescience" of our Lord is relieved when we refuse to affirm that the Lord Jesus *could not know* certain things which lay beyond His natural vision. Even in face of the declaration in Mark xiii. 32, that the Son did not know the time of His return, the patristic writers were extremely reluctant to attribute ignorance to Him whom they called Master and Lord. This reluctance indeed was so great that they did not

always act fairly towards the text. Athanasius teaches that in professing ignorance, Christ "spoke humanly—as man I do not know."¹ Gregory of Nazianzus takes the words to mean that the Son did not know "apart from the Father."² Basil translates as follows: "No man knoweth, nor do the angels, nor did the Son know, except (by the grace of) the Father."³ Ephraim Syrus declares that "Christ, though He knew the moment of His advent, yet that they might not ask Him any more about it, said, 'I know it not'." Thus he laid himself open to the sharp reproof of Theodoret: "If He knew the day and, wishing to conceal it, said He was ignorant, see what blasphemy is the result of this conclusion. The Truth tells a lie".⁴ This solicitude for God puts dishonour on the Scripture: The error is in imagining a boundary line as drawn around our Lord's knowledge; whereas there could be no limit to the possibility of His knowledge other than the wisdom of the Father and the grace of the Spirit. If, then, we believe that the Divine Spirit veiled that good hour from the sight of the Son during His life in the flesh, we cease to be sensible of any contradiction between our faith and the Gospel record.

¹ *Adv. Arian.* iii, 38, 45, 48. ² *Theol. Orat.* iv. 15. ³ *Epist.* 236.

⁴ See Gore, *Dissertations*, pp. 123 ff, 130 f. H. C. Powell gives a detailed account of the patristic explanations of Mk. xiii. 32, *The Principle of the Incarnation*, pp. 422 ff. Bengel has an interesting note on Mk. xiii. 32. He does not refer to the action of the Spirit (in this he is surely at fault), but he speaks of the enlargements and retractions in the consciousness of Christ: "There is an admirable variety in the motions of the soul of Christ. Sometimes He had an elevated feeling, so as hardly to seem to remember that He was a man walking on the earth; sometimes He had a lowly feeling, so that He might almost have seemed to forget that He was the Lord from heaven. And He was wont always to express Himself according to His mental feeling for the time being: at one time as He who was one with the Father: at another time again in such a manner as if He were only of that condition in which are all ordinary and human saints. Often these two are blended together in wonderful variety." Cf. R. Hooker, *Eccles. Pol.* v. liv. 6.

(b) The controversies which rent the Church with reference to our Lord's self-consciousness: was it single or twofold? and as to His will: was there a human will operating along with the divine will? are perhaps insoluble when we state them thus. At the Sixth Council of Constantinople, in 680, the co-existence in a perfectly harmonious relation of two wills, as a consequence of the two natures, was insisted upon. On the contrary, modern theologians are ready to affirm: "There could not be two wills, or two consciousnesses, in the same personality, by any psychological possibility now credible."¹ But if we reflect upon the Spirit of God as energising in the manner which we have indicated, we think of the Man Christ Jesus, who was in all points made like unto His brethren, as of one who passed His earthly life in a relation analogous to that in which the redeemed of the Lord find their true being. A quotation from Dr. Thomas Chalmers may help to illustrate this: "He hath animated the moralities of our terrestrial condition with the breath and spirit of the upper sanctuary, and hath thereby shown that our condition, humble as it is, admits an impress upon it of a celestial character, and so of being elevated to celestial glory. When I see in the Person of Jesus Christ how the everyday virtues and commonest occasions of life were throughout impregnated with the very Spirit of the Divinity, I think I can better understand, when told to resemble Him, what it is to be filled with the whole fullness of God". This of course is only an analogy, but it is one which provides a perfectly sound basis of comparison; "because as He is, even so are we in this world." On the other hand, to say that the co-operation of a divine and a human will in Him who is now enthroned above all being, is "psychologically impossible," is to ask psychology to give an authoritative ruling in a sphere to which she has found no access.

¹ Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 319.

(c) Can we say anything of worth in relation to the union of the Son of Mary with the Creator Word, by whom all things came into being, by whom all things are upheld? How can we bring into one view Him who, to use the phrase of Luther, "lies in the cradle and hangs on the breast of a virgin, but sits nevertheless at the right hand of the Almighty Father"? Bishop Martensen practically admits that we cannot venture to expound this theme; it is higher than the heavens. "It must be allowed," he says, "that the Son of God leads in the economy of the Father a twofold existence; that He lives a double life in His world-creating and in His world-completing activity. As the pure *Logos of Deity* He works through the kingdom of nature by His all-pervading presence, creates the presuppositions and conditions of the revelation of His all-completing love. As the *Christ* He works through the kingdom of grace, of redemption, and perfection, and points back to His pre-existence."¹ This is just to say with Augustine, "Not as if one were saying anything, but only not to be silent." Calvin approaches the problem in a different way: "Although the boundless essence of the Word was united with human nature into one person, we have no idea of any enclosing. The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was pleased to be conceived miraculously in the Virgin's womb, to live on the earth, and hang upon the cross, and yet always filled the world as from the beginning."² This verdict resembles the decision of Chalcedon

¹ *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 267.

² *Institutes* II. xiii. 4. cf. Athanasius, *De Incarn. Verbi Dei* C. xvii. "Not such was the Word of God in His human nature: for He was not restrained by the body, but rather Himself controlled it; so that He not only was in it and in all things, but was at once outside the things that are, and was resting in the Father alone. And this is the marvel that He was at once living the daily life of a man, and as the Word was quickening all things, and as Son was present with the Father."

in this, that it encloses the mystery, and bars out error, but does not carry us to a helpful conclusion. Perhaps it carries us as far as we may reach, apart from the doctrine of the Spirit; but if the Holy Spirit, in living union at once with the Word and with Jesus the Nazarene, ministers to Him who is the Word made flesh, the powers and wisdom of the Godhead as occasion requires, we do not any longer think of "two distributing centres," nor do we distinguish the *Logos in carne* and the *Logos extra carnem*—the Word in flesh and the Word beyond the flesh. We are able to rest in "the simplicity of Christ."

There are many other points to which one might draw attention. Let me mention only one.

(d) The New Testament tells us that there was a progression in our Lord's experience. As in His holy childhood He had "advanced in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and men" (Luke ii. 52); so, in the course of His ministry He became increasingly fitted for His high-priestly service. He lived, as all the saints must live, by faith, in prayer, and in the employment of the gifts of grace. By these means the Holy Spirit led Him ever into new circumstances, which opened to Him experiences hitherto untried. Thus He learned in continually increasing measure the mystery of the divine will: "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation" (Heb. v. 8, 9). This is shown to us in various instances in the Gospel story. The supplication in Gethsemane, for example, offered "with strong crying and tears," brought Him into an understanding of the secret counsel of God, which, we may judge, had not been revealed to Him till then: "O My Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). In His life and suffering,

in His resurrection and ascension, He was, as perfecter of our manhood, "perfected for evermore."¹ For, in the glory of the Upper Sanctuary,

" Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies
His tears, His agonies, and cries."

Let me repeat: The Spirit, who was the Great Efficient in the incarnation, who was the Supreme Energy in word, in act, and in the sacrifice of the Lord; who was bestowed upon the Church as the very Spirit of the Risen Redeemer, was (may we be permitted to say?) the Bond of Union between the divine and human natures of the Son; conferring guidance, control, illumination, power, upon the Son of man. The only enlightenment which Scripture seems to offer upon this *Union*, often named "the crux of Christology" is this mediation by the Spirit.

The figure which Scripture employs to illustrate this most intimate relation is, the Cloud of the Divine Glory (*cf.* Luke i. 35; John i. 14). Sometimes it is a mere spark shrouded in close-rolling folds of mist: at other times the Cloud bursts into flame, and all is illumined with the splendour of God. As we apply this emblem to the manifestation of the Incarnate Word, we recognise that the horizon of our Lord's knowledge, the reach of His power, might narrow itself or extend, as the divine wisdom should suggest. At one time He might accept the word of men for information regarding simple things; at another His eye would pierce the heavens and His thoughts compass the eternities. To-day He rests as a wearied man on the coping of the well of Sychar, to-morrow He will tread down the storm waves of the Galilean Lake with exultant feet. On the third day He will crush the dragon's head, and swallow up death in victory.

PART IV
THE SEATS OF DOCTRINE



CHAPTER XVII

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son."

—*The Epistle to the Hebrews.*

THE great system-builders in theology—"poor creed-mongers" Whittier irreverently called them—were accustomed, before they entered on the task of construction to search out and set in order the "seats of doctrine." The view of Scripture of those heroic systematists may have been defective, their scheme of interpretation lacking in proportion; but the principle on which they proceeded was unquestionably sound—"What saith the Scriptures?" This age holds it to be a fault in the early theologians that they did not test their sources, applying to every chapter and line the keen edge of a whole armoury of critical weapons. And yet, one scarcely knows. After all is said, is not the Word its own best evidence? When Augustine, sitting in a garden in Milan, was meditating on the manner in which God gives deliverance from inbred sin, he heard a clear young voice out of a neighbouring garden, say, "Take up, and read; Take up, and read." The New Testament lay beside him; he opened it, and read: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. xiii. 13, 14). As he read, Augustine, formerly the slave of sinful passion, became a new creature

in Christ Jesus. One grows weary of attempts to defend, confirm, or rehabilitate the Scriptures. The primary line of defence is the Holy Spirit's witness in and with the Word. To the soul athirst for God or aflame in His service the Sacred Writings require no vindication; they break forth as streams of living water from the Rock of Ages. Many even of those who hold advanced opinions in Biblical criticism will admit this. "If I am asked," said Professor Robertson Smith,¹ "why I receive Scripture as the Word of God, and as the only perfect rule of faith and life, I answer with all the fathers of the Protestant Church, Because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God, because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Jesus Christ, and declaring to us in this His will for our salvation. And this record I know to be true by the witness of His Spirit in my heart whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak such words to my soul."

At the same time, those who ask for proofs of authenticity, who require historical verisimilitude, are clearly within their rights. The second line of defence must be maintained not less earnestly than the first. When so many inquiring minds are questioning the reliability of the sources of the life of Christ, it is our duty to offer, so far as our powers permit, a reason for our hope. Otherwise, one would wish, in discussing the central theme of our religion, to accept the Scriptures at their face-value, and proceed upon them without further argument. All that one can do in this short study is to point out lines of evidence which have been carefully investigated in scores of learned treatises. We shall therefore take a rapid survey of some of the sources of the doctrine of Christ which the Scriptures offer.

We shall consider first of all the Teaching of the

¹ In his *Answer to the Form of Libel*.

Apostles. As Dr. Adeney has said: "The burden of the apostolic gospel was a preaching of Christ in the most direct and personal way. . . . The apostles set out to make known the person of their Lord, and enforce His claims."

It is universally conceded that "the apostolic testimony" underlies our canonical Gospels. It is possible to make too much of this; it is also possible to make too little. Herder and Ewald may have over-emphasised the importance of this source; Zahn and Stanton may have underestimated it. "We have evidence that the Gospel of Mark actually rests on oral teaching," is the verdict of Dr. Peake, and Sir John Hawkins explains the freedom with which St. Luke makes use of his written sources as due in part to the oral knowledge of the life and sayings of Jesus Christ which as learner and as teacher he had previously acquired and on which he would fall back frequently to the neglect of the documents at his hand.

The burden of witness which the apostles bore was of "those things which have been fulfilled among us." The Twelve were selected by the Lord to be "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word"; that is, to observe and report. From the first those elect disciples understood that their companionship with Jesus involved their giving testimony to the facts of His ministry. On the eve of the great Pentecost Peter stated this plainly: "Of the men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts i. 21, 22).

At first, the apostolic witness would be quite unformed. The believers would meet in some upper room, and rehearse among themselves incidents of the Master's life

among men. Each would relate something that had specially impressed himself. But the swift influx of converts into the Jerusalem Church would call for a more carefully organised mode of witness. Those new believers, together with the numerous inquirers who assembled with them, would desire as full a statement as possible regarding the manner of our Lord's life in the flesh; and the apostles would endeavour to satisfy the demand. We read that the newly-added members of the Church "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching" (Acts ii. 42). The demand for fuller knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus on the part of the catechumens would become so exacting that some of the early disciples would be set apart, to be "ministers and interpreters" of the apostles. These would convey the instruction of the original witnesses to groups and classes formed from the body of new believers. With this more careful organisation there would come, almost inevitably, a selection of those topics which would most readily minister faith to the hearers. The miracles and parables specially chosen for commemoration would be those that gave the clearest illustrations of gospel truth. Consequently, almost everything narrated in the Gospels lends itself to evangelical impression. Even so late as the delivery of the Fourth Gospel this process of selection persisted: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name" (John xx. 30, 31).¹

¹ "It must not, however, be supposed that this tendency to preach rather than to write was any drawback to the final completeness of the Apostolic Gospel. . . . It was, in fact, the very condition and pledge of its completeness. Naturally speaking, the experience of oral teaching was required in order to bring within the reach of writing the vast subject of the life of Christ. . . . The twelve foundations of the wall of the city of God bore the names of the twelve Apostles." Westcott, *The Study of the Gospel*, pp. 169 ff.

It did not fall within the witness of the apostles to relate the story of the Saviour's birth and infancy, or to narrate events which belonged to the days of His youth in Nazareth. For them "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" was His baptism by John (Mark i. 1). Their distinctive testimony began then, and continued until the ascension withdrew the Lord from outward view. We can understand how the first preachers of the Evangel did not think it fitting to incorporate into their proper witness the story of the Birth in Bethlehem, even though this may have been an open secret in the Church at that early date. This gracious and heart-compelling recital would come most fitly to those who had already been instructed in the heavenly nature of the Lord, and rejoiced to think of His mission of mercy from the right hand of power.

Nor on the other hand would those high truths contained in the sacramental meditations recorded by John (chs. xiii.-xvii.) be adapted to the opening intelligence of new-born babes in Christ. As a first lesson in the school of grace they would be far above the comprehension of the pupils. It is of importance to remember that the Synoptic Gospels grew out of the oral testimony of the apostles addressed to those who were being initiated into the mystery of Christ.

As the Gospel passed into new fields the catchetrical classes would become more numerous. First in Palestine, then in the great world-centres—Antioch, Ephesus, Rome—finally in every province of the Empire, these schools of faith would be established. Theophilus, who may have been a magnate of Antioch, had evidently undergone instruction, formally or informally: "That thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things which thou wast taught by word of mouth" (Luke i. 4).¹

¹ Zahn will not allow that *κατηχήθης* had acquired the technical meaning it afterwards received. *Introduction to the New Testament*, ii. 42 f.

The method of instruction would vary.

In Palestine the story to be communicated would be repeated by the teacher, perhaps a number of times; it would then be taken up in recitation by the pupils. Nothing would be written, for a model Hebrew scholar was compared to a cistern which loses not a drop. But when the Gospel came, either to the Hellenists or to the Greeks, writing would naturally be employed. The teacher would read the lesson, and the catechumens would copy upon their tablets the words as they were uttered. Then the scholars would con over the lesson till it was securely fastened in their memory. Perhaps the incident recorded in John vii. 53-viii. 11, may have been a stray lesson from a catechetical instruction which has found its way into the Fourth Gospel. If so, it may be regarded as a sample of other lessons. These would not be long; they might perhaps extend from eight to twelve of our verses, and be confined to a single incident or utterance. We may pick out a number of such sections from the Second Gospel, set like bricks in a thin layer of mortar.¹

We know that the apostles remained together in Jerusalem for a number of years (Acts viii. 1), rehearsing unweariedly to generations of pilgrims at the Feasts those incidents in the life of our Lord which had come by instinctive selection to be the substance of the apostles' teaching, and doing so under the solemnizing sense of their responsibility to the Church for the true narration of the words and doings of the Lord Jesus. This fact would lead to a similarity in the testimony so close as to be nearly identical. The apostolic witness would in this way crystallize into definite form during the years of their ministry in Jerusalem.

¹ "The single schemes are often told in a life-like style without unessential additions and reflections, but they stand for the most part as a mere collection of disconnected anecdotes." Wellhausen, *Einführung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, p. 52.

In this country and in our time we are apt to undervalue the accuracy of memories that have been specially trained, as among the Moslem or the Chinese. But along with the wonderful sameness of the reports there are many minute differences which it is not always easy to account for. Dr. Arthur Wright has a fruitful suggestion with regard to this. "Verbal memory," he says, "is very much a matter of age. Set a boy of ten to learn a story by heart, and he will reproduce it verbatim or not at all. Let a man of forty learn it, and you will have abundance of those minute changes which characterize our Gospels."¹

As the apostolic witness was borne on into distant lands, and repeated in various Churches, slight differences, which neither confused fact nor altered doctrine, would arise. The testimony would not be less reliable because of the minute textual changes which would emerge in the ordinary course of transmission. Such slight variations occur on every page of our Gospels.

¹ *St. Luke's Gospel in Greek*, xi.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WITNESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

"Behind Christianity is the Jesus of history; . . . behind the Jesus of history is the redemptive activity of the living God."

—DR. RAWLINSON.

IT is frequently alleged that, as a considerable range of time stretches between the events narrated and the Gospel Records, there is room for modification, enlargement, idealization. But in truth no such interval as is imagined does intervene between the life of Jesus and its commemoration—no dark "tunnel" where faith stumbles and is afraid. The sequence is unbroken, the history runs without arrest. It is probable that in their completed form the Gospels belong to the second half of the first Christian century; but the scenes and sayings which they record are linked by indisputable testimony with the days of Christ.

In the first eleven chapters of the Acts of the Apostles we have a reliable history of the earliest years of the Church's story. The most conspicuous event in this period is the conversion of Paul. We are not able to date this remarkable occurrence with any exactness. Harnack puts it within a year of the crucifixion. Sir W. M. Ramsay thinks that three years may have elapsed. Rackham is of the same opinion. Bishop Lightfoot suggests four years. Zahn adds one year more—five in all. Let us take it for granted, then, that the annals of the early Church contained in these eleven chapters are mainly concerned with a period of about five years, stretching from A.D. 30 to 35.

We have now to ask, What is the witness of those years, as set forth in these chapters, to the facts contained in the Four Gospels?

We may rely on the accuracy of Luke as a historian. He claims, and with reason, to be "accurate"—"in all things"—from the first. Wendt acknowledges that Acts is "an historical work of invaluable worth." Sir W. M. Ramsay says emphatically: "Luke's history has been unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness." "You may press the words of Luke," he goes on to say, "beyond any other historian's, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment." This verdict carries greater weight when we remember that at one time Sir W. M. Ramsay held an entirely different opinion and that his present conviction is the result of most careful examination. Other writers, such as Dr. Knowling in his three courses of the Boyle Lectures, have tested every important point in the Apostolic narrative, and have found that it invariably rings true. This is, as a little reflection will show, a very searching test, for in the thirty years included in the Acts the scene of the apostles' labour shifts from land to land; they witness frequent political changes; titles, customs, forms of procedure, modes of worship, vary constantly; and yet the narrator (we have confidence in saying) has not been detected in a single error. On the contrary, a considerable number of supposed blunders have been proved, after full examination, to be absolutely correct.

Some things we may examine for ourselves

At the time when Luke wrote, the organization of the Church had become much more complex than it was in the early days of which he is the historian; but nothing of this intrudes into the narrative.

The doctrinal pronouncements, too, had become more articulated, but in these chapters we meet only a simple heart full devotion to the Redeemer, which is content,

apart from argumentative statement, to fill heaven and earth with His name.

Nor can we say that the historian has idealized the Church of the first days. The beauty of holiness that rested upon it is certainly displayed, but it is displayed in an honest narration which conceals no fault. We read of Ananias and Sapphira within the Christian Society, of Simon Magus a professed convert, of murmurings among the widows who received the Church's bounty, and of the narrow spirit of Judaism which drew apart from other believers and sharply censured the apostle of the circumcision himself.

One point is important, though, to appreciate it fully one must have some knowledge of the original tongues. When Luke is writing without dependence on others, as in the preface to his Gospel or in the later travel-narratives in the Acts, he writes fluent Greek of the classical mode; in other places his language is coloured by the authorities which he follows. In the chapters before us, for example, every page is sprinkled with Aramaisms. From this we conclude that he had before him an early Palestinian source, and that he adhered to it with such scrupulous fidelity as to reproduce its very idiom and lexical peculiarities.

Another consideration will appeal to every reader. The New Testament writers were serious men, profoundly impressed with the importance of the revelation that had been entrusted to them. It came to them as spirit and truth, and they affirmed it with utter truthfulness, believing also that they wrote under the guidance and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Now let us ask: What are the points of contact between these chapters and the four canonical Gospels?

In the first place we have an outline of the life of our Lord which corresponds in every particular with the Gospel narrative.

Jesus was of Nazareth, son of Mary, and one of several brothers. He was baptized by John in Jordan, receiving from the Father the unction of Spirit and power. He chose twelve disciples (their names are given). Eleven were Galileans; these all remained faithful. Judas, the twelfth, betrayed Him. By this disciple the captors of Jesus were guided; for this act of treachery he received a reward; in a fit of remorse he hanged himself. Jesus went about doing good. He healed many who were sick. He was prophet and teacher. The Messianic predictions of the Old Testament were all fulfilled in Him; in particular, the prophecy of the Servant of Jehovah. He was condemned by Caiaphas and the rulers of Israel. He was tried by Herod, was sentenced by Pilate. The Roman judge wished to discharge Him, but, yielding to clamour, handed Him over to the executioners. Barabbas, a murderer, was preferred to Him. He was crucified, was raised from the dead, showed Himself alive to His disciples, ate with them. In the Spirit He commanded His followers to bear His name to the ends of the earth; but charged them to tarry in Jerusalem till they should be clothed upon with power from on high. During forty days he instructed them in things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. His return has been foretold. He was received up into Heaven.

We might, in the second place, examine a number of allusions contained in these chapters to certain events that are recorded in the Gospels. Some of these are easily recognizable, others are less evident. But the cumulative impression left on one's mind is that the early chapters of the Acts are in fullest accord with the Evangelic Records. We may however pass from this to a third point, namely the identity of the view entertained of our Lord's Person and Mission with that which was announced by Christ Himself and reproduced in the Gospels.

The resurrection of the Redeemer, His return to the Father, His session at the right hand of God, and His coming again in glory, were predicted by Himself and witnessed to by the apostles. If the two lines of teaching were placed in parallel columns, the similarity would be very striking. It is evident that the apostles affirm these things on the authority of their Master.

It was by the ascended Saviour that the gift of the Spirit was dispensed, even as He had said: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you." How great must He be, who is empowered to commission the Holy Ghost!

The departing Saviour assured His people that though He might seem to leave them, He would surely remain with them all the days, even to the end. And in the history we are informed that it was He who added to the Church such as were being saved; by His power the lame man at the Gate Beautiful was restored to strength. It was He who made Æneas whole, who instructed Ananias regarding Saul of Tarsus, who received the spirit of the departing Stephen. At every call of duty, in every hour of danger, the disciples felt that "the hand of the Lord was upon them." He enters so fully into the life of His people, that they and He are one: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

The exalted majesty of the Lord Jesus filled the thoughts of the first preachers of the Gospel. St. Paul begins his ministry with the unhesitating affirmation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He is, said Simon, the Author of life, the Lord of all, the Judge of quick and dead. His return in the power of the Father is to be the signal for the restitution of all things. Collectively and individually, His people offer to Him the tribute of praise and the homage of worship. Thanksgiving, petition, adoration, are addressed to Him. All these affirmations find their warrant in the Gospels.

This glorious One is the Saviour, and the only Saviour, of men. He is the sole object of faith, the preacher's constant theme. Remission of sins is in His name, and by His gift. The largest, freest proclamations of salvation are made on His behalf: "Unto you first God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

Language could scarcely go further: the Johannine theology is enshrined in the witness of the first days; the Gospels are certified in advance.

In a word: the conclusion that is pressed upon us by these considerations is, that between the life as it was lived and the record of it in the Gospels there is no place for any "idealization" of the Lord's earthly ministry; neither is there opportunity for the formation of "myth" or "legend." All that the Evangelists have to say of the greatness of the Redeemer was said in the years immediately subsequent to his death. Indeed, we may safely assert that the main stream of Gospel testimony was flowing freely in the Church in the year in which Jesus died.

CHAPTER XIX

PAULINISM IN EMBRYO

“Any essential distinction between the preaching of Paul and the primitive apostles as to the teaching, life, sufferings, and resurrection of Jesus is inconceivable in itself, and no trace of it can be found either in the New Testament or the literature of the sub-apostolic age.”

—PARET.

IT was at one time a common saying that St. Paul vitiated the simple doctrine of Jesus by importing into it forensic conceptions. Even now this is sometimes affirmed. But Paulinism was an experience before it became a doctrine, and it dates from the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. The awakened mind of the future apostle struck deep root into the earliest teaching of the Church, as it was delivered within five years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Acts we have three accounts of the conversion of Saul: the first (in ch. ix) belongs to the earliest stratum of the Acts; the second and third (in chs. xxii. and xxvi.) are later in time, but they are reported by an eye and ear witness. All the narratives therefore are contemporaneous and reliable.

The charge laid against Stephen, the first martyr, was that he was alleged to have predicted “that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.” The glorious truth enshrined in this malicious invective had faced Saul in his disputations in the synagogues and in his inquisitorial progresses as an emissary of the Sanhedrin. He fought against it furiously, but again and again it pierced his

conscience as a goad pricks the flanks of an unruly steer. And when at last he yielded to its insistence, this truth became the hinge on which the prolonged controversy which the Judaisers waged against him turned. This controversy ran its full course until he, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, roundly asserted that "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (Gal. v. 6).

In the vision which blinded the eyes of Saul and cleared his spiritual sight Saul realized the identity of the suffering and glorified Redeemer, whom he at once addressed as "Lord." From this good hour the two poles of St. Paul's Christology were the death and the resurrection of Jesus: "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again." Behind the cross he envisages the life; beyond the broken grave he sees the session at the right hand of power. The appellation "Lord" is not a mere courtesy title: already the Church had conferred upon the Son of Mary the dignities and glories accorded in the Old Testament Scriptures to Jehovah. One of her earliest watchwords was "Maranatha," our Lord cometh. The splendour of our Lord's early life is as it were swallowed up in that light which is inaccessible and full of glory.

When Ananias came to the house of Judas in the street called Straight, he unfolded the Gospel to the stricken Pharisee. He led him, as Jesus was wont to lead his disciples, to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. There Saul of Tarsus learned that the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, "that Just One" (Isa. liii, 2, Acts xxii, 14) was the guilt-bearer for sin. "And now why tarriest thou?" demanded the preacher: "Arise, . . . and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." This he did, cleansing his soul in the blood of atonement and receiving the seal of baptism. Then, his ears being opened, he heard the Saviour say: "I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from

darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts xxvi. 17, 18). Repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, remission of sins, and newness of life, is not this the essence of St. Paul's missionary teaching—"My Gospel", as he was wont to call it? How his personal experience led to the formulation of his doctrines all his Epistles declare. Salvation, as he conceives it, is of grace, by the way of the Cross, through faith.

Two distinctive features of the teaching of St. Paul appear only dimly in the narratives of his conversion. One of these is the believer's union in life with his Lord. There is indeed a suggestion of it in his Galatian Epistle: "It pleased God, who . . . called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me" (i. 15, 16). But it may be more correctly deduced from those other words of Ananias: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest . . . be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ix. 17). One can understand that in the entrance into the life of grace the full teaching of the indwelling of Christ could scarcely have been apprehended by the newly-forgiven soul; but it is all implied in the gift of the Holy Spirit who reproduces in the believer the life of the risen Lord.

Another tenet of the Pauline scheme which is not clearly expressed in the conversion of Saul is our Lord's creative and sustaining energy in the universe. Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. But we read that the new convert immediately began to preach Christ under two exalted titles. He is the Christ, and the Son of God (Acts ix. 20, 22). In these two appellations all fullness of power resides. They fulfil the revelation in the history, and in the prophetic scheme of ancient Israel.

And now we see St. Paul going forth in his unrelenting service for the kingdom under the sway of one all-impelling motive: "For My name's sake" (Acts ix. 16). As he went, he found that in all the Churches there was (amid many differences of opinion on other points) only one doctrine of Christ—His Person, His atoning Sacrifice, and His triumphant Resurrection—only one voice: "Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed" (1 Cor. xv. 11).

CHAPTER XX

THE MAKING OF A GOSPEL

"The oldest Christological documents contained in the New Testament teach the personal pre-existence of the Son of God."

—LOBSTEIN.

THE First Three Gospels, usually termed "the Synoptic Gospels," describe the ministry of the Master, from the same point of view—that of those who were commissioned to bear witness of His days in the flesh. This testimony took form in what was later known as "the teaching of the apostles."

Jesus at an early period in His ministry "called to Him whom He would, and they came unto Him." The men He selected were neither theorists nor scholars, but plain men of the people, open-air men, quick to observe, straightforward in their thinking, and honest in their narration of things seen and heard. They were admirably fitted for the discharge of the duty assigned to them, which was to bear witness. Every consideration that can be advanced goes to confirm the trustworthiness of their testimony. And this testimony is the ground plan of the first three Gospels.

The interrelation of the Synoptic Gospels is a critical question of great complexity.¹ It has fascinated three generations of New Testament scholars, but it still defies solution.

¹ For our purpose in these pages it is not necessary to discuss the relation of the first three Gospels to one another.

A hundred years ago Goethe confessed that to enter on an historical and critical examination of the Gospels was like trying to drink up the sea.¹ This discouraging utterance would still be more in place to-day. The number of writings on the genesis and growth of the canonical Gospels which have appeared in the course of the last century is quite beyond computation. In spite of this, however, our knowledge of the processes by which the Gospels have come to be has not been greatly advanced. It is impossible that so much careful study should not have borne fruit; but the clear gain is less than one might reasonably have anticipated. On this point Dr. Latimer Jackson gives a well-considered finding; "If some established results can be reckoned up, they are few in comparison with many open questions. . . . The present state of the Synoptic Problem has been described as 'chaotic.' To a certain extent the description must be allowed. There is nevertheless some warrant for stating the position in more hopeful terms. The goal which for upwards of a century has been kept in view lies still ahead."² Synoptic criticism is a moving point; one cannot build upon it. One may illustrate this quite simply. Canon Streeter admits that all recent discussion of the historical evidence for the Life of Christ has been based upon the assumption that we have only two primary authorities, the Gospel according to Mark and an unknown document the presence of which in the First and Third Gospels is thought to be inferentially ascertained.³ This view is still held by many; it is tersely stated by Professor Dodd: "Mark and Q. are (along with Paul) the pillars of our knowledge of the facts of the life and teaching of Jesus." Accordingly, "the amount of historical fact that

¹ Moffatt, *The Historical New Testament*, p. 262.

² *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, pp. 436, 454.

³ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 221 f.

emerges . . . is small in bulk, but not negligible".¹ If the authentic testimony to the earthly life of the Redeemer shrinks so as to be only "not negligible," the theory which brings us to such an issue ought to be sifted with the most jealous care. Canon Streeter, in emancipating himself from this hypothesis in its rigour, bears witness to the narrowing effect which it exercises on the judgment. He now inclines to a "Four Document Hypothesis."² Some German scholars postulate a trilogy of sources. It is apparent then that there are no "assured results" of Synoptic criticism which can be brought forward to disparage the reliability of the Gospels as we have them. A peradventure cannot discredit a well-attested fact.

At this point one does not bring forward the security which divine inspiration must convey to the apostolic word. That belongs rather to "the first line of defence." For our argument now it will be enough if, with Dr. Godet, we merely assume that "the authors of our Gospels were men of good sense and good faith." When for instance St. Luke expressly tells us that he has traced the course of "all things," "accurately," "from the first", "in order", and that his aim was to convey to Theophilus and all who should read his gospel a sure knowledge of the facts therein recorded, we have the word of an honest man, who certifies that he has, to the best of his power, composed a reliable history. Indeed he assures us that he was careful not merely to reproduce his authorities with exactness, but that he sifted his material, determining the relative values of the several sources.³

¹ *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 230.

² *The Four Gospels*, p. 227.

³ Of παρακολουθεῖν, in Lk. i. 3, Dr. Plummer says: "Here it does not mean that Luke was contemporaneous with the events, but that he had brought himself abreast by careful investigation. . . . He has begun at the beginning and has investigated everything." *I.C.C.*, p. 4.

This question of good faith, simple as it may appear, antagonizes successfully very much recent criticism on the Gospels. Mark and Luke we know—let us leave Matthew out of our reckoning for the present. These were “ministers of the word,” and if they were not themselves eye-witnesses of the Saviour’s ministry, they wrote at a time when many who had known Jesus in the flesh were still alive and influential in the Church. It is almost unthinkable that such men would falsify the record of Him who is the Truth, and who taught insistently the duty of pure veracity in speech. If they had done so, they would have been detected and shamed. Yet even reputable scholars do not hesitate to attribute to them a desire to “heighten,” to “idealise,” to “exaggerate,” to “over-colour,” to “enhance,” to “sublimate,” to “tone down”, for apologetic or dogmatic reasons, the events which they record. An apostle may conceivably err, but he cannot deliberately and of set purpose misrepresent his Master.

The Second Gospel, which is considered by many to be the earliest, is largely built up out of materials supplied by the teaching of the apostles. Tradition regards it as informed by Simon Peter. It is possible that Mark, who accompanied in his missionary journeys the apostle of the circumcision, has reproduced in this Gospel most of the lessons which, according to the instruction of Peter, he conveyed to the catechumens.

In the First Gospel we have a number of sayings of the Lord not reported elsewhere.

It is important to remember that writing was not the rare acquirement of a few learned men, as it was in the days of the Crusades, for example, but lay quite within the reach of ordinary persons. Sir W. M. Ramsay reminds us that “The knowledge of writing was far more generally diffused in the east Mediterranean lands in ancient times than it was in medieval Europe. . . . Still

it is only in a few countries that the familiar use of writing in everyday life is so widely diffused as it was in the most civilized regions of the Mediterranean world about the time of Christ."¹

At Oxyrhynchus, on the edge of the desert, some fragments of papyrus, with writing apparently of the third century A.D., were unearthed by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt, in the years 1897 and 1904. When the writings were deciphered there was found part of a collection of miscellaneous "Sayings of Jesus." The presence of these "logia" in the dust-heaps of Ancient Egypt suggests that from an early time collections of the Master's words had been drawn up and sent into circulation. It is thought by many that St. Paul, for example, possessed a copy of our Lord's most distinctive utterances. While there is little direct quotation in the Pauline Epistles, there are frequent, and often subtle, allusions to the words of the Lord; this implies a close and familiar knowledge.²

We know that the knowledge of shorthand was a common accomplishment in business and literary circles in the first century of our era. It is likely enough that Matthew the tax-gatherer would employ an abbreviated script in the Customs' booth at Capernaum. It would be natural, therefore, for him to record those sayings of Christ which had most deeply impressed himself.

Papias points to something of this sort when he says: "Matthew composed the logia in the Hebrew dialect, and each one translated them as he was able." The word *logia* does not require us to think only of the *sayings* of Jesus (*cf.* Rom. iii. 2); but perhaps those holy oracles formed the bulk of this treatise. Sir John Hawkins probably expresses the general opinion when he says: "We

¹ *Luke the Physician*, p. 99.

² See 1 Cor. vii. 10, ix. 14; Rom. xii. 14, 17, xvi. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 15, v. 2; 2 Thess. iii. 3; 1 Tim. v. 18, vi. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 12; etc.

regard it as meant by Papias to express Sayings of the Lord together with notices of the occasions which led to their being delivered, when such notices were needed for the full understanding of them.”¹

We may take it for granted that there existed from an early date a catena of the sayings of Jesus, framed in some cases, no doubt, in their historical settings, and widely disseminated among the Churches. It is probable that St. Luke had access to such a collection, perhaps to more than one. In the nature of things these sayings would be recorded as they were uttered, or immediately after. Sir W. M. Ramsay, therefore, seems to be justified when he asserts that this Lost Common Source, as he calls it, “cannot be placed later than the time when the disciples began, at the first Pentecost, to understand the true nature of the Gospel, and Peter began to declare it publicly, establishing it on the firm foundation of the sacrifice of Christ’s death.” He maintains that it “was written while Christ was still living.”

In his preface to the Third Gospel, which is almost the only Scriptural guidance we have as to the genesis and growth of the Evangelic Records, St. Luke speaks of many who had “taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us.”

One may be permitted to imagine this impulse fulfilling itself (no argument depends on our view of the process). A catechumen who had been receiving instruction from, let us say, John Mark, Silvanus, or Prochorus, would have collected a full series of incidents or sayings belonging to our Lord’s earthly ministry. Possessing these, the catechumen would naturally wish to add to them any additional tradition which might reach him of matters “concerning the Lord Jesus.” Of these some would be at first hand, altogether worthy of trust, others might be conveyed

¹ *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, p. 54.

through a number of intermediaries, and be less reliable. The additional matter might be inserted into the catechetical instruction in order of time, so far as that could be ascertained. St. Luke tells us that many such digests were known to him. Some of them he had, no doubt, examined; he does not say that he is indebted to any. His fine historical sense would flinch at the mingling of careful instruction grounded on the witness of the apostles, with hearsay which might have come through devious channels with meagre authentication. And the Spirit of inspiration would guide him into the truth. But as there can be no doubt that he drew a very considerable part of his Gospel from the accredited teaching of the "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word", he may have derived a portion of this from some of the more careful of these memoranda.

It is certain that there was in the Church of the First Days a great mass of tradition relating to our Lord's earthly ministry. Some of this would be in writing, much of it would be oral. But as time went on, the records would be prized above the floating tradition, and the synoptists would rely mainly on the documentary witness.

While all the synoptists may have gathered material from their Gospels by personal research, we are certain that St. Luke did so. We find a record of these inquiries especially in the three sections which are not represented in the Gospel according to Mark—Luke vi. 20—viii. 3, ix, 57—xviii, 14, xxii, 14—xxiv, 12. Of the Birth Narrative we have already had occasion to speak.

A wide field of enquiry must have lain open to Luke. In Antioch he would become acquainted with his namesake Lucius of Cyrene, Simeon called Niger, Manaen, Barnabas, and others. In Jerusalem he would be introduced to many of the apostles, to James the Lord's brother, and perhaps to Mary the mother of Jesus. In Philippi he would meet Silas and Timothy; in Cæsarea Philip and

Mnason; in Rome Mark, Aristarchus, Epaphras, Tychicus, Crescens, Eubulus, Pudens, the saints in Cæsar's palace, the household of Aristobulus, and many others. One result of so wide a range of companionships would be the opening of many doors to his careful inquiry into the facts relating to Christ and to the establishment of the Church. In his frequent visits to Palestine, especially perhaps in his prolonged stay at Cæsarea, he would often meet with those who had seen our Lord in the flesh; in search of information he may also, from time to time, have traversed those "holy fields" where the Saviour walked and in which He did His mighty works.

At least two-fifths of the Third Gospel seem to have come through the personal researches of St. Luke. When we think of such incidents as the Mission of the Seventy, the Visit to Martha and Mary, the Call of Zacchæus; of such parables as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Importunate Widow; of such discourses as that on Prayer, on Trust in God, on Counting the Cost, on Forgiveness and Faith; of the Appearance of Jesus before Herod, the Story of the Penitent Robber, the Journey to Emmaus, and much besides, we may have some conception of the debt we owe to the diligence and labour of search of this Evangelist.

A brief quotation from Mr. Latham's *The Risen Master* with reference to "the Sermon which our Lord preached on the Way to Emmaus" may be permitted at this point.

"The conversation here related was carried on in Aramaic, and from the vividness of the narrative I infer that it must have been taken down while the events were fresh in the narrator's mind. From that language clearly came this history which St. Luke has preserved. . . . We have reason to thank the translator into Greek, whoever he was, for having executed his work with fidelity. There is apparently nothing left out, and certainly there

is nothing put in with a view to favouring any particular doctrines. Nothing could be more free from bias than this document is. The spokesman from whose lips the Aramaic was taken must have been one of the two travellers to Emmaus, and since writers of that time avoid speaking of themselves by name, I take the narrator to have been the companion of Cleopas rather than Cleopas himself."

It is probable that the First Three Gospels passed out into circulation between the years A.D. 60 and 70—the arguments which would place the Gospel according to Luke later have little weight—within the lifetime of many who had companied with the Lord Jesus. But we can carry our feeling of assurance back to earlier dates than these. The Birth Story comes from the Nazareth home, before the ministry of Jesus began. The collection of our Lord's discourses was probably compiled during the lifetime of Jesus. The Apostolic Testimony dates from the day of Pentecost. And the rest of the material was the carefully-sifted testimony of those who had been "eye-witnesses" of those "matters which have been fulfilled among us."

CHAPTER XXI

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

“The Gospels are the first-fruits of all the Scriptures, and the first-fruits of the Gospels is that of John, into whose meaning no man can enter unless he has reclined upon the bosom of Jesus.”

—ORIGEN.

I

A WELL-KNOWN critical scholar asserts that with reference to many questions, and especially with regard to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, “our age has cancelled the judgment of centuries.” Until recent years there was little serious doubt within the Church that this book was written by John the son of Zebedee. Within the last two generations, however, there has been ceaseless and eager controversy on this point, and the debate is not ended. The contention is keen because the matters at stake are momentous. In this Gospel we have the most unequivocal assertions of the true Deity of our Saviour; and these are professedly given by one who was intimately conversant with Him, by that one indeed who better than any other understood His character, the purpose of His mission, and the significance of His teaching. This is a testimony which cannot possibly be regarded with indifference.

The testimony of history to the Fourth Gospel has been worked over scores of times, and little is to be added to the verdict of Ebrard: “We may boldly declare that, excepting a few of Paul’s Epistles, no book of all antiquity, either in Christian or heathen literature, can show such

numerous and sure proofs of authenticity as the Gospel of John." Since these words were written¹ a few morsels of evidence of inferior value have been brought into notice, a change of emphasis upon points that are not of capital importance may be confessed. But in view of all that is known, a writer so impartial as Dean Armitage Robinson is able confidently to assert that "No Gospel comes to us with stronger external evidence of its acceptance by the Church."¹

Let us recall the tradition of the Johannine authorship.

In the Muratorian Fragment (c. A.D. 170) we have the following account:—

"At the entreaties of his fellow-disciples and the bishops, John, one of the disciples, said: "Fast with me for three days from this time, and whatsoever shall be revealed to each of us (whether it be favourable to my writing or not) let us relate it to one another." On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name, aided by the revision of all. . . . What wonder is it then that John so constantly brings forward Gospel phrases, even in his Epistles, saying in his own person, 'What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written?' For so he professes that he was not only an eye-witness, but also a hearer, and moreover a historian of all the wonderful works of the Lord."

Irenaeus (c. 180) speaks of the origin of the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, and continues: "Thereafter John, the disciple of the Lord, who lay on His breast, he too gave forth the Gospel while he yet abode at Ephesus in Asia; And all the elders, they of Asia who had conferred with John the disciple of the

¹ The substance of this chapter has appeared in a recent number of *The Evangelical Quarterly*.

Lord, bear witness that (their tradition) had been delivered to them by John, for he remained on with them until the days of Trajan."¹

Clement of Alexandria (c. 200) writes as follows: "John, last of all (the evangelists), perceiving that what had reference to corporeal things was sufficiently related, encouraged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, wrote a spiritual Gospel."²

Eusebius the historian (d. 340) had access to many early documents. He reports as follows: "John, they say, having all the time preached, but not using his pen, in the end set himself to write. The occasion was this: on the three earlier Gospels being handed to him, he, they say, admitted them and testified to their truth, although they were so far defective that the earlier stages of the ministry were absent from their accounts." After commenting on the fact that the Fourth Gospel was complementary and supplementary, he adds: "One who attends to these circumstances can no longer entertain the opinion that the Gospels are at variance with one another."³

The prevailing belief in the Early Church at least as early as the close of the second century, was that the Fourth Gospel was the work of a disciple of the Lord, generally held to be the son of Zebedee, that it was written in Ephesus in the old age of the author, and that it was the drawing together of frequent narrations made during many years of ministry. There is also the suggestion that this Gospel, as regards its phraseology, was revised by the elders and bishops of the Province of Asia.

This tradition is almost world-wide. Dr. Sanday invites attention to the distribution of evidence between A.D. 170 and 200: "Irenaeus and the Letter of the Churches

¹ *i.e.* till A.D. 98 at least. *Haer* III. i. 1; iii. 4.

² Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 14.

³ *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 24.

of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul; Heracleon at Italy, Tertullian at Carthage, Polycrates at Ephesus; Theophilus at Antioch, Tatian at Rome and in Syria, Clement at Alexandria. The strategical positions are occupied, one might say, all over the Empire. In the great majority of cases there is not a hint of dissent. On the contrary, the four-fold Gospel is regarded for the most part as one and indivisible. . . . Eusebius, who is really a careful and candid person, and has ancients like Origen and Clement behind him, can describe the Gospel as unquestioned both by his own generation and by preceding generations."¹

II

In the Gospel itself there are several indications of authorship. At the close of the twenty-first chapter—a postscript perhaps, but certainly an integral part of the Gospel—certain persons, the elders of Ephesus, presumably, attest that he who “wrote these things” was the disciple whom Jesus loved (verse 24). In the nineteenth chapter the piercing of our Lord’s side is mentioned, with this attestation: “He that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true” (verse 35). And in the first chapter the account of the calling of Andrew and “that other disciple” seems to strike a firm biographical note. Accordingly, we have in the Gospel itself the definite assertion that it was written by the disciple whom Jesus loved, that he was one of that little company who stood beneath the cross, and we have the high probability that this witnessing and beloved disciple was John the son of Zebedee.

Many fanciful identifications of the beloved disciple have been ventured on—that he was a purely ideal figure, the spiritual brother of Jesus, that he was the Christian Church in the freshness of its youth, that he was Andrew, St. Paul,

¹ *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 238.

Nathanael, Lazarus, the young man of Mark xiv. 51, the rich young ruler, a Jerusalem disciple of priestly family, etc. The strangest opinion of all is the identification of the beloved disciple with Judas Iscariot. At least two German scholars have propounded this amazing theory, and an English Commentator has so far lapsed from a sane judgment as to confess that there is something to be said for this astounding conclusion.

Let us consider the facts.

The disciple whom Jesus loved was one of the Twelve. He was at the Supper Table with Jesus, seated next to Him. He speaks of the position which he occupied there as a proof of the Master's affection, as if the Lord has requested him to sit by His side in sympathetic understanding (John xiii. 23). He had come from Gethsemane, following the Lord and His captors, and was followed in turn by Simon Peter: He went in with Simon into the High Priest's Palace. It was to this disciple that Jesus entrusted the care of His mother. John was presumably a cousin of Jesus—his mother, Salome, and Mary being sisters (John xix. 25, Matt. xxvii. 53)—in comfortable circumstances (Mark i. 20, Luke viii. 3, Matt. xxvii. 55). Seeing then, that the brethren of the Lord did not believe on Him (John viii. 5) and were possibly married (1 Cor. ix. 5) what could be more fitting than that the mother of the Lord should be cared for by her nephew John, one whose love had linked itself inextricably with the person of the Lord? The association of this other disciple with Simon Peter on the resurrection morning is further proof that he belonged to the inner circle of our Lord's company. In the twenty-first chapter we read again of this other disciple. He is one of the Galilean group; he is neither Simon, nor Thomas, nor Nathanael, for these are named. He is a fisherman, he describes the occasion as to the manner born, and he counts his fish. He is to be spared to a great age (verse 22).

It is he, then, who is the author of this Gospel, and he wrote it from personal knowledge—the testimony of an eye-witness.

Another text may be taken into this argument: We have already referred to it. In the first chapter we read of two disciples of the Baptist, one of them Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, the other unnamed. After an interview with the Saviour, Andrew was the first to bring his brother to Jesus: the implication being that the other inquirer brought his brother also (John i. 40, 41). Soon after the Master calls Andrew and Simon, James and John, to become His followers. They respond at once, for they have already yielded their lives to Him. One cannot help feeling the thrill in the narrative as the evangelist recalls that day more than half a century gone when he first looked upon Jesus and heard His voice. This, we believe, is that “other disciple,” recipient of his Lord’s loving kindness, who wrote this Gospel. The personal experience recorded strikes the key to which the entire composition is set. This treatise is not only a true history. It is a Gospel. It is a progress from faith to faith.

III

No one with any feeling for literature can doubt that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John are by the same hand, and we have seen how the writer of the Muratorian fragment uses the witness of the Epistle to confirm the truth of the Gospel. In this we have contemporaneous evidence of the most convincing character.

The fact that the two treatises are bound together in our New Testament should not be allowed to weaken the force of the evidence. Bishop Lightfoot holds that the Epistle “was in all likelihood written at the same time with and attached to the Gospel,” and that it was intended to be circulated with the Gospel. He adds: “This accounts for

its abrupt commencement, which is to be explained as a reference to the Gospel which in one sense preceded it. This accounts likewise for the allusion to the water and the blood (1 John v. 6 f) as the witnesses to the reality of Christ's human nature, the counterpart of the statement in the Gospel narrative (xix. 35)."

The Epistles of Ignatius (c. A.D. 110) remind us in many places of the speech of St. John, particularly in this passage which is strictly parallel to John vi. 33, 48, 54: "I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham. And I desire the drink of God, the blood of Him who is undying love and eternal life."¹ Dr. Burney extracts from the Epistles of Ignatius 36 reminiscences of the teaching of the Fourth Gospel, and adds to these 11 allusions to the First Epistle of John, and he gives this verdict: "Ignatius's knowledge of the Fourth Gospel: . . . seems to be proved to demonstration."² Dr. Sanday's opinion is much to the same effect but is expressed with his accustomed carefulness: "I do not think there can be any doubt that Ignatius has assimilated and digested to an extraordinary degree the teaching that we associate with the name of St. John. . . . He seems to me to reflect the Johannean teaching with extraordinary fidelity." And he concludes that we must either "fall back upon the tradition that Ignatius was an actual disciple of St. John," or else believe that "Ignatius had really had access to the Johannean writings years before the date of his journey to Rome, and that he had devoted to them no cursory reading but a close and careful study which had the deepest effect upon his mind."³

¹ *Ad. Rom.* 7.

² *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 153 ff.

³ *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* p. 241-245.

We have a chain of three witnesses: The Apostle John, who lived till the reign of Trajan. Trajan began to reign in A.D. 98, but the *Chronicon Paschale* relates that John lived on till A.D. 104. The second link in the chain is the life of Polycarp, who was a pupil of John. He died A.D. 155, so he cannot have been born later than A.D. 70. The third name is that of Irenaeus, a pupil of Polycarp, born in Asia Minor about A.D. 115, died at Lyons about 190.

Irenaeus writes to his former fellow-disciple, Florinus, of their intercourse with Polycarp: "I can describe the very place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal experience, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words."¹ Irenaeus attributes the Gospel to "John, the disciple of the Lord" who reclined on the breast of Christ; he claims him as "a true witness of the tradition of the apostles." Tischendorf affirms that there are in the writings of Irenaeus no fewer than eighty direct quotations from John's Gospel.

Between Ignatius and Irenaeus, (c. 180) whose testimony is of palmary importance, few Christian writings are extant. In the Epistles of Barnabas and of Polycarp we have approximations to the diction of St. John. The Valentinians (140-180) were evidently familiar with the Fourth Gospel. One of them, Heracleon, actually wrote a commentary upon it. Justin Martyr (c. 147) refers frequently to the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, and tells us that they were read publicly in churches, and were esteemed as sacred books. He seems to quote the Fourth Gospel in these passages: "Christ has said, Except ye be born

¹ Eus. *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20.

again, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but that it is impossible that those who have once been born should enter into the womb of those who bore them." (*cf.* John iii. 3, 4). "The Baptist said, I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying" (*cf.* John i. 20, 23). "And His Son, who alone is properly called the Word and Son, who was also with Him, and was begotten, before the works . . . is called Christ." Justin's use of the Fourth Gospel is now generally acknowledged. Tatian (*c.* 160) was a disciple of Justin, and helps to bridge the gulf between Justin and Irenaeus. He worked the Four Gospels into a harmony. This harmony, or "Diatessaron" as it is called, opens with St. John's arresting sentence: "In the beginning was the Word." After this, evidence multiplies that this Gospel was held to be authentic, and was generally received in all the Churches. Only an obscure sect, called the Alogi, did not acknowledge it as of authority, but they testified to its existence towards the end of the first century. These dissentients seem to have denied our Lord's true Deity.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia was born *c.* 72 A.D. and died *c.* 153. He was according to Irenaeus a hearer of John the apostle, a companion of Polycarp, an ancient man (*i.e.* a disciple from the first period of the Christian Church). About the year 100¹ he wrote in Greek "An interpretation of the Sayings of the Lord" in five books. It has perished, only a few fragments survive in the writings of Irenaeus and the History of Eusebius. Papias was a man of sincere piety and of considerable industry, but possessed a somewhat weak judgment—so at least Eusebius affirms.

Eusebius quotes from the preface of Papias' work a passage which has been much discussed:

¹ Sanday, *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 251; Burney, *Aramaic Origin*, etc., p. 135.

"But if anywhere anyone also should come who had companied with the elders, I ascertained (first of all) the sayings of the elders with reference to what Andrew or Peter had said, or what Philip, or what Thomas, or James, or what John, or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord had said, and (secondly) what Aristion and John the Elder, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I judged that the things to be derived from books were not of such profit to me as the things derived from the living and abiding voice." (*H.E.* iii. 39.)

In this paragraph the name of John occurs twice, once with a past tense ('had said'), and once in the present ('say'). We may judge either that the two are one and that John the son of Zebedee had survived all his brethren and was known affectionately as "the Elder," that is, the venerable and venerated one—such a one as John the aged; or that two persons are spoken of here, John the disciple of Jesus, and John the Presbyter, the second being, of course, later in time.

When it is said that John and Aristion were "disciples of the Lord"; it is to be remembered that members of the apostolic company receive the same designation. So that it is at least possible that "John the Elder" was John the Apostle, the last survivor of that goodly fellowship.

On the other hand it is equally possible that an important member of the Ephesian Church at the close of the first century should have borne the name of John. But if so, he was a shadowy figure when contrasted with the son of Zebedee, and by no means such a person as we should expect to be the author of the Johannine literature of the New Testament. So far as we know there was only one John of sufficient importance to be an authoritative source of Christian doctrine.

There are a few fragments attributed to Papias by

later writers, although these quotations are not at all reliable. One of these comes to us from two sources (originally, we may believe, one), and asserts the martyrdom of John.

We remember the saying of Jesus to the two sons of Zebedee, "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup" (Mark x. 39). John's elder brother suffered martyrdom (Acts xii. 2). Some have thought that our Lord's prediction points to martyrdom at the close of St. John's prolonged life; but this is not really implied in the scripture. A monkish chronicler of the ninth century, Georgius Hamartolus, declares that "John the Apostle, after he had written his Gospel suffered martyrdom, for Papias in the second book of 'The Sayings of the Lord' affirms that he was put to death by Jews, thus plainly fulfilling along with his brother the prophecy of Christ regarding them." There is evidently some confusion here. In an Epitome (VII. or VIII. cent.) of the Chronicle of Philip Sidetes,¹ (a church historian of the fifth century, but one of little repute) we read: "Papias says in his second book that John the divine and James his brother were slain by Jews." These two notes seem to depend upon one another, and that they are not accurate is proved by the employment of the epithet 'divine' applied to John, a title which certainly was not in use so early as the time of Papias. Besides, as Dr. Stanton remarks, "Philip of Sidé has proved to be a bungler." Archbishop Bernard similarly says: "Either Philip or his epitomiser was a blunderer."² It is very probable that Philip misinterpreted or perhaps through forgetfulness misreported, Papias. The widespread tradition regarding John the Apostle is that he died a natural death at an advanced age.

¹ Philip, of Sidé, a town on the sea-board of Pamphylia.

² Socrates, the historian, who was a contemporary of Philip of Sidé, complains of his inaccuracy with some severity. *Eccl. Hist.* vii. 26, 27.

The Syriac martyrology, of date 411, contains the following commemoration: "Dec. 27. John¹ and James, Apostles in Jerusalem." The date is too late to have any value, and the commemoration contradicts a number of definite statements earlier in time and more authoritative in character. Also it seems to indicate that James and John suffered together. But Acts xii. 2, with the subsequent history, contradicts this. Six years after the death of James, St. Paul received the right hand of the fellowship from John the son of Zebedee (Gal. ii. 9).

There is just one other witness to John's martyrdom, Aphrahat, a Persian writer, gives us the following under date 343: "Great and excellent is the martyrdom of Jesus . . . to him followed the faithful martyr Stephen whom the Jews stoned. Simon also and Paul were perfect martyrs. James and John trod in the footsteps of Christ."

It is worth remembering that in the Apocalypse the word "martyr" is used of every faithful witness to Jesus who has maintained his testimony at price. This John the beloved disciple undoubtedly did.

V

The argument from internal evidence would require a volume to do it justice. It usually is drawn out along lines such as these: The writer was a Jew, a Jew of Palestine;¹ he was familiar with the land, the people, and their customs, as these existed in the time of our Lord, before the desolating scourge of Rome passed through; he was an eye-witness of the events narrated; he was one of the apostolic company, and by inference John the son of Zebedee. This line of argument is fully drawn out by Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, whom others have followed.

¹ This is so obvious that Dr. Burney has written a volume to prove that the Fourth Gospel was written in Aramaic: *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, 1922).

As to the time when the Gospel was written: the traditional belief of which we have spoken more than once indicates a date near the close of the first century, and this is generally received. Dr. Vacher Burch is of opinion that the Fourth Gospel, substantially as John wrote it, up to Chapter xix. 35, began to circulate "near to the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ."¹ It would probably be more correct to say that many of the great truths enshrined in the Gospel were orally communicated to fit audiences from a very early date. Dr. Burney suggests some time between 75 and 80, possibly even earlier, for the Gospel as we now have it, and this is not impossible. But we may content ourselves with the traditional view that the Gospel comes to us from somewhere near A.D. 90. It is not likely to have been much later, for, as we have seen, the Epistles of Ignatius are "full of Johannean theology."

But in recent years a number of "composition" or "partition" theories have been set forth with labour and learning.

With the exception of John vii. 53—viii. 11, which may be regarded on textual grounds, as possibly a section of the "Apostolic Teaching" which has been incorporated in the text,² and the twenty-first chapter, which was apparently added to remove a misinterpretation of a saying of Jesus, the impression which the Fourth Gospel leaves upon the mind is that of strict unity. This impression has been so strongly felt by students of the Gospel that even Strauss speaks of "the seamless robe," and Dr. Sanday remarks: "The one rock on which it seems to me that any partition theory must be wrecked is the deep-seated unity of structure and composition which is characteristic of the Gospel."

To show this in detail would carry us far beyond our

¹ *The Structure and Message of St. John's Gospel*, 1928.

² An important group of MSS. inserts this narrative after Luke xxi. 38.

range; but we may confirm this impression by the significant fact that those who break up the organic unity of this Fourth Gospel come to no sort of agreement among themselves. Their views are so discrepant that they may be said to eliminate one another. Let us glance at one or two of these readjustments.

Wendt suggests that the Fourth Evangelist had before him a source composed of logia of Jesus. He composed a framework in which these might be inserted, describing the occasions on which the words were spoken, and adding discourses of his own.¹

W. Soltau feels that the invention of the framework of the Gospels is too stupendous a fraud to be credible. Accordingly, he postulates two sources—one a collection of sayings, the other a narration of events. This second narrative shows two strands—Johannine legends, and statements taken from the Synoptic Gospels. These three sources are combined either by the narrator or by a later editor.²

Wellhausen postulates "a foundation document" which is largely narrative. This may account for perhaps one-third of the contents of the Gospel. It passed from hand to hand within the group of Asian Christians of the second century. Not one or two, but many were employed in the elaboration of this first sketch. They revised, recast, amplified, added, apparently at pleasure, the great sayings of Jesus being among the unauthorized additions.³

Dr. Garvie distinguishes three strains in the Gospel. First, there is the testimony of the witness which often passes over from direct testimony to reflections upon the matters attested. This witness is not the son of Zebedee, but he is the disciple whom Jesus loved. In the second place, the contribution of the witness is worked over by

¹ *The Gospel According to St. John*, 1902.

² *Theol. Stud. und Kritik*, 1908.

³ *Das Evangelium Johannis*, 1908.

the Evangelist, who Dr. Garvie thinks, may have been John of Ephesus, the Elder. Then came the Redactor, or Editor, probably a Roman, a contemporary of Papias, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr. He gave to the Gospel its authoritative currency by identifying the disciple whom Jesus loved with the son of Zebedee, and by ascribing to him the writing and the testimony.¹

To what we have already said we may add this consideration. Those passages of the Gospel which are attributed to a second or third hand contain some of the most solemn and heavenly of our Lord's sayings—such as the sacramental discourses, His intercessory Prayer, and His own Self-witness. In reading these sections of the Gospel one seems to be bathed in spiritual purity and light, and to have drawn as near the absolute Truth as one can reach on earth.

Let us suppose that a redactor, whether Roman or Greek, had invented some of those great utterances. Would he not have been guilty of an insupportable irreverence? For instance, could anyone who loved Jesus and called Him Lord have dared to compose a prayer appropriate for His use in that solemn hour between the Last Supper and the Agony in the Garden?

VI

I have tried to indicate (one can do no more) the main line of argument for the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. But many even of those who admit that it comes to us bearing the signature of one who was "an eye-witness and minister of the Word" are unwilling to receive it as veritable history. The objections urged are for the most part mere literary judgments which appeal with varying force to different persons.

(a) We are told for example, that this treatise is by the confession of its author a Gospel, not a history. To say

¹ *The Beloved Disciple*, 1922.

this is to misapprehend the apostle's meaning. What he does say is, "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye may have life in His name" (xx. 31). The story is told, the incidents are related, with this view, that the readers of the Gospel may be led to faith in the Saviour. But faith must have its warrant in truth, and the truth regarding Jesus is embedded in facts of history. The first duty of the evangelist, who wishes to convince his readers of the truth as truth is in Jesus, is to be historically veracious. Otherwise faith has no foothold. We dishonour an apostle, and in him we do despite to the Holy Spirit of inspiration, if we suggest that this evangelist is indifferent to the historicity of the facts which he records.

(b) Or, it is said, if the Fourth Gospel is the work of St. John's old age, may we not expect to find that his recollection has become obscure or faint? Tradition (Muratori Fragment, etc.) makes it clear that John had often told the incidents recorded in his Gospel, and we are sure that in the first telling, with a fresh memory and a vivid apprehension of the events narrated, he would be scrupulously careful to report with exactness the things which happened, and in particular to give his Lord's words with careful precision. After a number of repetitions channels would be worn in the mind, and the story of Jesus as related by him would become fixed, and as it were stereotyped.

(c) Would it be possible for one to recall exactly those long discourses of Jesus, and His high priestly Prayer? To do so would not be beyond the power of those in our own time who are endowed with a highly retentive memory. But there are special considerations which apply here. In the first place, our Lord's discourses, were conversations rather than addresses; and points in an animated conversation or controversy might easily fasten themselves in

the recollection of an interested auditor. Even the sacramental discourses move from point to point according to the mental response or verbal questioning of the hearers. They range themselves, as Vinet remarks, in "a divine confusion." One whose mind is strained to a high nervous excitation could hardly fail to remember impressions made upon the spirit at such a time. This would especially be the case when John in the most solemn moment of his life, as we may believe it to have been, accompanied his Lord into the Holiest of all in the high priestly Prayer. We must remember also that our Lord before He passed from earth promised His disciples that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of truth, would bring to their remembrance all that He had spoken to them (John xiv. 26). It is John who recalls this assurance: we may believe that he had found it true in his own experience.

(*d*) It is alleged also that the outline of the ministry of Jesus, as it is traced in the Synoptic Gospels, is different from that which is given in the Fourth Gospel. The tradition informs us that one object of the writer was to supplement the other three. They had stressed the Galilean ministry, he emphasizes the Judæan. But there are numberless threads which pass from the one Gospel to the other three, interweaving into one harmonious pattern the life of the Son of man. As, for example, when the Synoptists say, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together" (Luke xxiii. 34). Or, where John speaks incidentally of the Galilean ministry.¹ Bishop Westcott in his Commentary instances, some scores of instances where those "delicate filaments" cross.

(*e*) Another difficulty, of which more has been made than seems just is the similarity of style between our Lord's sayings and the narration of St. John. Two things may

¹ i. 43, ii. 1, 11, iv. 3, 43, 45-47, 54, vi. 1, vii. 1, 9, 41, 52, etc.

be mentioned in this connection. First, the assimilation of mind which brought the beloved disciple into ever growing likeness to Jesus would react on everything he said and did. It would influence, among other things, his style of writing. Second, the sayings of Jesus were in many instances uttered in Aramaic, and St. John translates them. Naturally, the translation would bear traces of the style of the narrator.

(f) The difference of subject and expression between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel has often been remarked upon. We must remember the audience to which each Gospel was addressed. The first three were to young converts and inquirers: The basis of the Synoptic Gospels was "the teaching of the apostles" (Acts ii. 42) and this took form immediately after the Great Pentecost; whereas the Fourth Gospel was addressed to mature believers, many of them belonging to the second generation of Christianity: these would be able to receive the lofty teachings which St. John records. But we must not exaggerate the difference. There is nothing in the Fourth Gospel that passes beyond such a saying as that of Matt. xi. 27: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him." "This," says Dr. Forsyth "is the Fourth Gospel *in nuce*." It is important to remember also that the Synoptists, recording as they do, the events of our Lord's Galilean ministry, report the words he addressed to plain men—husbandmen, fishers and craftsmen; whereas the Johannine records are reminiscent mainly of Jerusalem and the temple, where our Lord had a highly-trained auditory. The one exception to this is John vi. 22-59; and there it is evident that the Lord is engaged in controversy with the doctors of the law.

(g) It is sometimes alleged that the figure of our Lord in the Fourth Gospel is different from that given in the other three. I do not think that this objection would naturally occur to any one. It did not occur to the first believers: they recognised at once the lineaments of their Lord. This presentation of the Master was accepted without demur by the Church in all provinces of the Empire. If John rises to the heavens of our Lord's fellowship with the Father he also sounds the depths of the humanity of the Redeemer. It is he who tells us that Jesus wept, that He thirsted, that He was troubled in spirit, etc. In all the New Testament there is but one image of the Christ, and it is more radiant than words can paint.

"The Fourth Gospel," says Dr. Vacher Burch, "is the most beautiful book in the world . . . and the secret of the spell of its beauty is that it portrays the historic Christ, and not another."

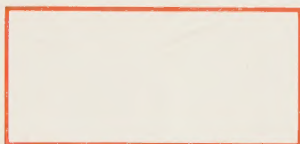
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